

Climbing Jacob's Ladder

BY JESSE BELMONT BARBER



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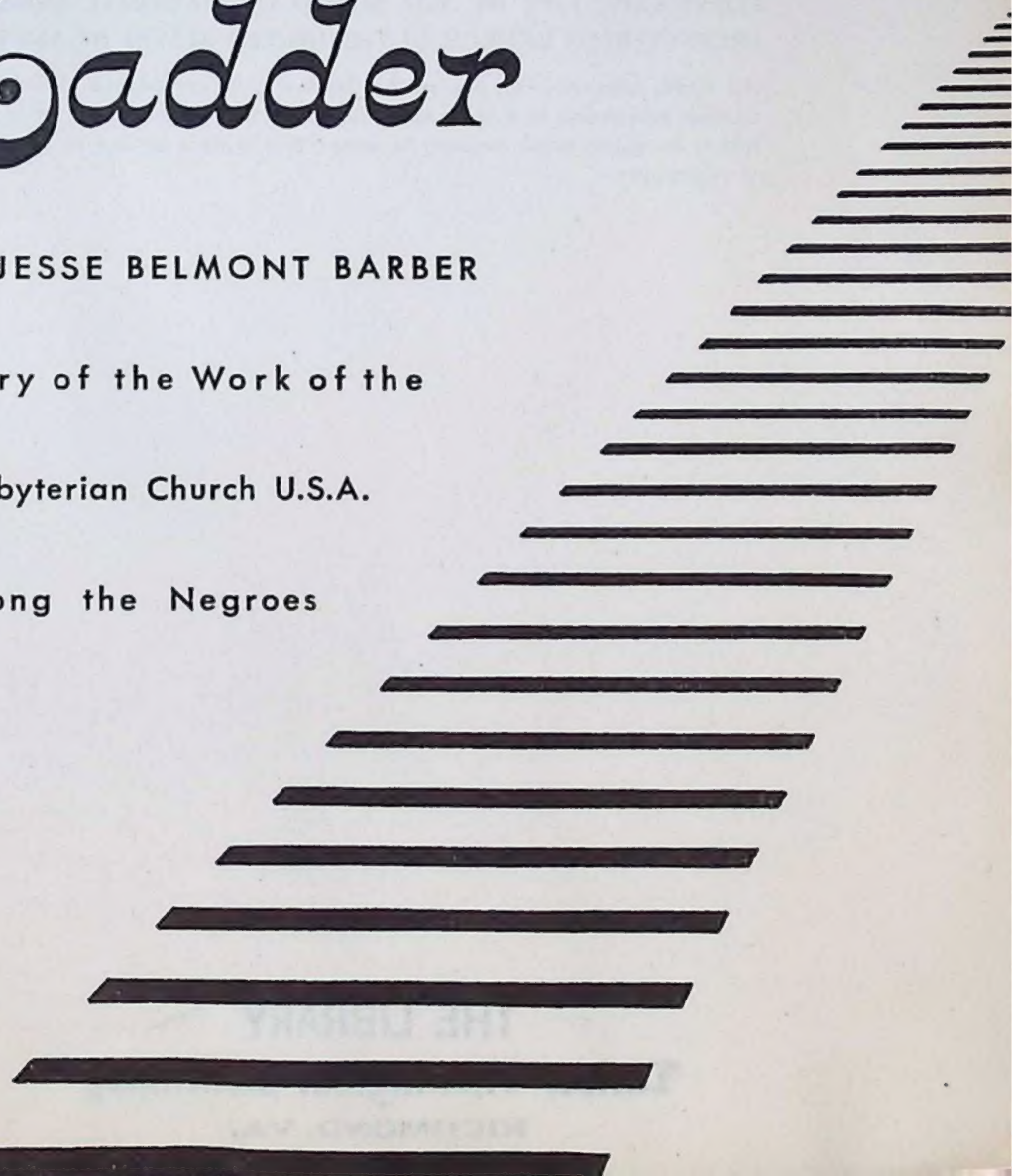
Climbing Jacob's Ladder

BY JESSE BELMONT BARBER

Story of the Work of the

Presbyterian Church U.S.A.

Among the Negroes



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TO MY WIFE

FOREWORD

CHOICE SPIRITS hover gloriously near as one engages upon a story such as this: of those who, valiantly toiling, struggled in the darkness of slavery; of the pioneers of the dawn of freedom, who laid enduring foundations; of those who today strive and yearn and aspire to make meaningful and blessed for the present age and for the coming years something of the precious heritage herein revealed. The labor has been a deeply hallowed one, a thrilling and an abiding joy.

This work was originally prepared as an academic study in the Department of Church History of Auburn Theological Seminary, under the scholarly direction of Professor Robert Hastings Nichols, Ph.D., and was completed in 1936.

A complete revision and the addition of new material to bring the story into contemporary relevance have resulted in the present volume.

An utterly boundless gratitude is here expressed to Dr. Hermann N. Morse, General Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of National Missions, the rich resources of whose mind and spirit have been so abundantly and unfailingly given; to Miss Janette T. Harrington, Secretary for Education and Publicity, who editorially contributed invaluable competence and comprehension; and to the many others whose eager devotion and helpfulness served greatly to aid and inspire.

JESSE BELMONT BARBER

New York City

1952

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INTRODUCTION

"CLIMBING JACOB'S LADDER" is both drama and history. There is stirring drama in this story of the spirit of a people contending against great odds, climbing rung by rung out of the deep valley of despond toward the clear light of freedom and Christian fellowship. It has, too, high significance as a chapter in the history of the Presbyterian Church and of its missionary enterprise.

This introductory word is offered both as an expression of personal appreciation of the author and of his very fruitful ministry, and as a sincere tribute to those workers, past and present, of whom he writes. When one is considering the capacity of a race to climb the ladder of progress, the argument *ad hominem* is convincing. The author's record as pastor of the Leonard Street Presbyterian Church and director of the Newton Community Center, Chattanooga, Tennessee, as Dean of the Theological Seminary of Lincoln University, and, since January, 1951, as a Secretary of the Board of National Missions is one of the grounds of our confidence in the future of Negro Presbyterianism and in the capacity of its leadership.

In this study, originally prepared and published as a Master's thesis in the Department of Church History of Auburn Theological Seminary and now revised and brought down to date, the author has done a careful piece of research and has made a contribution of real value to the literature of the subject. Even the casual reader will hardly overlook the distinctive factors in the development of this phase of National Missions which differentiate it from every other phase. A very large part of Presbyterian National Missions has been concerned, from the outset, with the service of handicapped or minority groups. Not infrequently, as with the Indians and the Orientals, they have been subjects of social injustice and oppression, or have been under pressure to adjust themselves to strange and changing circumstances. But no other group with which National Missions has dealt has been assigned such a role in our social, economic, and political history as the Negro race has filled.

The part of the history that antedates the Civil War is remarkable enough. A few short generations suffice for this whole population, brought here against its will, to exchange the paganism of the jungle for Christianity, albeit a Christianity strongly marked by the social outlook of slavery and plantation life. But as a mission enterprise, work for Negroes,

before emancipation, was largely a by-product. The pen of the Emancipator, backed up by the sword, was the instrument of destiny.

The Negroes, who had been slaves and now were free, were thrust into a world where they had no ownership of land, where they occupied an anomalous social and political position, where they had no institutions of their own, and where they were a minority group in a society which was largely hostile to their natural aspirations. That society, however charitable its attitude might become, could not understand or accept the goals toward which the Negro race must now be moving. That deeply entrenched social system, though shaken and in some degree shattered by the shock of war and its aftermath, remained a difficult obstacle in the path of progress for this impoverished but determined people. The long period of disorganization and reconstruction increased the social and economic hazards to be overcome.

The Negro people as a whole had no background of education, no indigenous culture suitable to this new world of freedom, no experience of collective activity, and practically no trained leadership in any field. Everything essential to a missionary enterprise and to progress in general had to be created from the ground up. Freedom in its negative aspect was theirs. In its positive aspect it had to be considered *ab initio*. Of the economic and political problem we need not speak. Schools had to be established, churches organized, teachers and ministers recruited and educated, equipment provided, methods of work pioneered and adapted. A social pattern had to be worked out and, most difficult of all, a tradition and a morale created.

All of this, and more, we must remember when we attempt to appraise the developments of the eighty-seven years since the end of the Civil War. If the results have not been all that could be desired, yet the record must stand as one of distinguished achievement that warrants a high expectation for the future.

HERMANN N. MORSE

General Secretary

Board of National Missions

1. Orientation

EARLY WORK BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR 1619-1860

IN THE LATE SUMMER of 1619 a Dutch man-of-war on its way to Bermuda touched at Jamestown and, in exchange for certain provisions, sold twenty Negroes to the settlers there. Thus simply begins the story, not only of what Bancroft calls "the epoch of the introduction of Negro slavery in the United States,"¹ but of the presence of the Negro as a factor that, probably more than any other through the succeeding years, has conditioned and determined the stream of American life.] Jamestown, the first permanent English colony in America, had been settled only twelve years before, and only the energy of the doughty Captain John Smith and the resourceful John Rolfe had saved the little band of colonists from the same fate as that of the earlier Virginia settlement. *The Mayflower* and its Puritans had not yet reached America. A year later, in 1620, they were to come to Massachusetts and thereby immortalize the rock in Plymouth Bay.

It is interesting to note that these first twenty Negroes, as well as those who were brought in for some considerable time thereafter, were not thought of as slaves in the sense in which the term came later to be used. Their status, more nearly that of indentured servants, was exactly the same as that of the whites and Indians of the same class. All were "bound out," or indentured, for a specified term of years, were entitled to food, clothing, and shelter from their masters, and expected to receive, although they did not always do so, fifty acres of land at the expiration of their term of service. It is estimated that this practice was generally followed for nearly a century. With the passing of time, however, circumstances united to render the lot of all such indentured servants less easy, and the status of the Negro tended more definitely toward servitude without end, or slavery. The factors involved in this development, while highly important, can be but briefly mentioned here.

¹George Bancroft, *History of the United States*, Vol. I, p. 197.

The year of 1653 witnessed an action of far-reaching consequence with respect to Negro slavery. A Negro, Anthony Johnson, said to be one of the original twenty Negroes brought to the colony, came into court to answer the complaint of another Negro, John Casor, who accused Johnson of holding him in indenture longer than the lawful period. Johnson averred that he had never seen the indenture papers of Casor and maintained that Casor belonged to him for life. Evidence that the status of Johnson had been changed to that of a freeman is established by the assignment to him of 250 acres of land in fee simple by the Northampton County Court in 1651 and by a court action relating to taxes in 1652. In spite of the fact that Casor offered to produce several witnesses, who incidentally were white men, the Court ordered that he be returned to his master, Johnson. "Thus was rendered, in strange and fateful irony, the first legal decision involving the right to the perpetual services of a Negro."² A second step was brought about in 1662, when a law was enacted in Virginia which provided that a child must follow the status of his mother. Other colonies, north and south, quickly followed with similar legislation. The third and final step in reducing the Negro to slavery was taken in 1671 when Maryland definitely declared that "the conversion of the Holy Sacrament of Baptism does not alter the status of slaves or their issue." This, too, was followed by the other colonies.

The matter has been well summarized by Dr. Charles S. Johnson:

As the institution developed, the Black Codes were crystallized in both custom and law; there were enacted the Fugitive Slave Laws so clearly foreshadowed earlier in the efforts to protect the planters in the labor of indentured servants. Humane sentiments persisted but could scarcely keep pace with the material necessity for binding this productive chattel more and more closely to its station. In the end, slavery became in theory not merely the life-time status of Negroes in a special economy which demanded it, but a universal condition to which they were fore-doomed from the beginning of time.³

The Attitude of the Church

The first definite impulse of religion on behalf of the slaves seems to have come from the Society of Friends, or, as they are more commonly known, the Quakers. In 1657 George Fox addressed a letter "To Friends beyond the sea, who have black and Indian slaves," in which he urged them to "give consideration to their slaves, since all nations were of one

²The entire question is ably treated in Weatherford and Johnson, *Race Relations*, 1934, pp. 104-110.

³*Ibid.*, p. 111.

blood." Richard Baxter's *Christian Directory*, published in 1673, has a chapter of "Directions to those Masters in Foreign Plantations who have Negroes and Other Slaves," in which he reminded the masters that the slaves had immortal souls "equally capable of salvation with themselves." The first to speak for the slave, the Quakers were also the first to espouse the cause of freedom and throughout the entire period of slavery they were loyal to their convictions. The names of John Woolman, Benjamin Lundy, Anthony Benezet, and Dr. Benjamin Rush are reminders of their unswerving devotion to a glorious ideal. By their consistent attitude and persistent endeavors the Quakers well merit the distinction of being called "Friends of Humanity."

Although Presbyterian churches are said to have been in existence long before, it was not until 1705 or 1706 that the first presbytery was formed in America. The first synod came in 1715, while the first General Assembly met in 1789. The first recorded action of the Presbyterian Church with respect to Negro slavery came in 1774 when Dr. Ezra Stiles and the Rev. Samuel Hopkins requested the approbation of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, at that time the governing body of the Church, for the sending of "two natives of Africa on a mission to propagate Christianity in their native country." When this was up for discussion, the question of Negro slavery came also to be considered, and "after much reasoning on the matter" a committee was appointed to bring in an overture on the subject. This the committee did. While the synod approved the plan of assisting in a mission to the African tribes, it deferred action on the question of American slavery.⁴

✓The first action dealing directly with slavery came in 1787. An overture was presented that recommended in "the warmest terms" to the churches and families under their care "to do everything in their power, consistent with the rights of civil society, to promote the abolition of slavery and the instruction of Negroes, whether bond or free." The synod not only approved this but further urged that education and sufficient time and means for procuring their own freedom be given to those held in servitude that they might be prepared for the better enjoyment of freedom and for becoming useful citizens of society. This utterance is historic and for many years served to stand as the testimony of the Presbyterian Church on the subject of slavery.⁵

In 1793 the General Assembly, having now been organized, adopted and ordered published the action of the synod in 1787, and two years

⁴*The Presbyterian Digest* (Moore), 1861, pp. 266, 267.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 267-269.

later when the question of communion with slaveholders, which had arisen in the Presbytery of Transylvania, was presented, the Assembly referred to the actions of 1787 and 1793, adding, somewhat pointedly it would seem, "with which, we trust, every conscientious person will be fully satisfied."⁶

And so the matter rested, or appeared to rest, until the Assembly of 1815, when the questions of holding, buying, and selling slaves and of communion with slaveholders, which came in from several sources, were presented. The Assembly, reviewing once more its former actions, counselled all conscientious persons to "live in charity and peace according to the doctrine and practice of the Apostles." Recognizing the transfer of slaves "in some sections of our country" to be "unavoidable," it nevertheless condemned traffic in slaves as being "inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel" and called upon presbyteries and sessions to make use of "all prudent measures to prevent such shameful and unrighteous conduct."⁷ Only three years passed before the General Assembly was called upon again to express itself upon the subject of slavery. A brief consideration of the background of the nation at this time will be helpful in evaluating the importance of the declaration of 1818.

During the period immediately following the close of the Revolutionary War and the emergence of America as a nation, the entire country experienced a strong wave of moral idealism, and the early abolition of slavery from the land seemed not merely possible but certain. Indeed, it would have been strange if the colonies, having united themselves to "throw off the yoke of oppression," had not been mindful that they themselves were holding their fellow human beings in bondage as slaves. There can be but little doubt, however, that this benevolent feeling was buttressed by some very practical considerations. In the North slavery long since had been found economically unprofitable, while in the South the collapse of the tobacco market and the absence of a profitable product curtailed its usefulness there. No more slaves were wanted; those already present were becoming a burden. Thus by 1800 almost all of the northern states had passed laws that prohibited slavery, while a number, including five southern states, had taken action against the further importation of slaves.

The Continental Congress reflected the same spirit. In 1784 a provision that would have prohibited slavery in the new states or territories after 1800, though failing, received a majority vote. In 1785 a measure was introduced that called for the immediate abolition of slavery, while in

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 270, 271.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 272.

1787 the historic ordinance prohibiting slavery in the "Northwest Territory" was passed with but one dissenting vote.

W. D. Weatherford comments:

[As one reads the annals of slavery in America it seems evident that it was near to being abolished in 1780 and the years following, owing to the impulse of freedom inherent in the American Revolution. Again, in 1800, when . . . the States had forbidden the importation of slaves, it looked as if it might come to an end. But an economic factor entered at this time which changed the whole complexion of the issue.⁸

The economic factor to which Weatherford refers was cotton, or rather the invention in 1793 by Eli Whitney of the cotton gin, a simple device by means of which the production of cotton was made profitable.] Greater by far than the influence of tobacco in its earlier time was cotton, "King Cotton," which sprang full-grown into being as the mightiest force and factor of the day.

The following figures clearly show the amazing growth in the production of cotton:

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Exported to Europe</i> |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1793 | 500,000 pounds |
| 1795 | 6,000,000 pounds |
| 1800 | 17,000,000 pounds |
| 1810 | 93,000,000 pounds |
| 1820 | 127,000,000 pounds |

"Before this tremendous development of cotton culture had taken place," says Woodrow Wilson, "slavery had hardly had more than habit and the perils of the emancipation to support it in the South. . . . After that, slavery seemed nothing less than the indispensable economic instrument of southern society."⁹ Thus by the year 1818 powerful economic factors were at work to bring about a complete change in attitude regarding slavery and to erect those defenses for its perpetuation that proved so formidable in later years.

We now return to the momentous deliverance of the General Assembly of 1818. The declaration pronounced slavery ["a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature . . . utterly inconsistent with the law of God, totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the Gospel of Christ."] It pointed out the duty of all Christians to "use

⁸Weatherford and Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
⁹Woodrow Wilson, *Division and Reunion*, p. 125.

their honest, earnest, and unwearied endeavors . . . to obtain the complete abolition of slavery." Expressing gratification for the early position of the Church on the question of slavery, it urged the continuance and, if possible, the increase of these efforts. The Colonization Society, recently organized, was warmly commended. The slaves, the declaration continued, should be instructed; cruelty and inhumanity to them should be discountenanced; and, if a Christian slave should be sold by a member of the Presbyterian Church, without consent, such a member should be suspended from the Church.¹⁰

Thus spoke the Presbyterian Church, and it can truly be said that the declaration of 1818 is in every sense comparable to the strongest deliverance of any Church in America on the subject of slavery. For the Presbyterian Church it was her peak, her loftiest, ablest, and most vigorous utterance. She spoke then as never before, and alas, as she never spoke again.

✓ During the years that followed, a period that extended almost to the Civil War, the Presbyterian Church was largely silent as to slavery. Other interests became absorbing: the opening of new fields "stretching away to the west"; the demand for preachers and missionaries; the establishment of schools and seminaries; and, by no means trivial, the extension of the reign of "King Cotton." In fairness, however, it should be noted that as late as 1834 the Synod of Kentucky condemned slavery and urged the gradual emancipation of the slave.

The question of slavery came before the Assembly in 1836 but was "indefinitely postponed" because of the "urgency of other business" and the "shortness of time."¹¹ But, in all truth, "other business" was very much in the mind of the Assembly of 1836, for there commenced that year the series of actions that resulted in 1838 in the complete division of the Church, by means of the famous "Excising Acts" of 1837, into the "Old School" and the "New School" branches. As interesting as are the circumstances of this division, they are not properly germane to this study. However large the question of slavery loomed in the background, as it undoubtedly did, it does not appear as a direct contributing factor in the division of 1837-38. The subsequent actions of the Old and New School branches of the Church regarding slavery can be briefly told.

✓ In 1845 the Old School Assembly, having been petitioned to speak on the matter of the holding of slaves by church members, gravely reminded itself that "slavery existed in the days of Christ and his Apostles," and, after excoriating the "movements of modern abolitionists," declared that

¹⁰*The Presbyterian Digest* (Moore), pp. 274, 275.

¹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 275, 276.

slavery, "under the circumstances in which it is found in the southern portion of the country, is no bar to Christian communion." It also took the position that such petitions tended to separate the northern from the southern portion of the Church and country, "a result," it affirmed, "which every enlightened Christian will oppose."¹² It was evident that such a pronouncement was too unpalatable even for its makers, for the next year the Assembly declared with finality: "Our Church has . . . during a period of nearly sixty years, expressed its views of the subject of slavery. During all this period it has held substantially the same sentiments. No further action upon this subject is at present needed."¹³ Thus ended the matter for the Old School.

The New School branch presented overtures on slavery to its Assembly with great frequency; its deliverances were far more encouraging to lovers of freedom and evidenced greater fidelity to, and consistency with, the declaration of 1818. This was undoubtedly due in great part to the fact that the strength of the New School branch was predominantly in the North, while the Old School had a large, vigorous, and extremely sensitive southern constituency, which it strove zealously to appease and retain. It was not until 1853, however, that the New School Assembly finally took positive action. That year the Assembly, in response to overtures from both North and South, recommended that the facts relating to the southern churches and slavery be given to the Assembly the next year. The measure was denounced as "inquisitorial" and the response was negligible, whereupon in 1855 the Assembly determined to act and appointed a committee to "report to the next Assembly on the constitutional power of the Assembly over the subject of slaveholding in our churches."¹⁴

The committee reported as ordered; but events rapidly developed that made further action in the matter unnecessary. The southern group of the New School Church became indignant and aroused, and the Presbytery of Lexington, South, gave official notice to the Assembly that many of its ministers and members were slaveholders "from principle," and "of choice." The New School Assembly the next year, 1857, met the challenge by voting overwhelmingly to "disapprove and earnestly condemn" the action, whereupon the Presbytery of Lexington and others sympathetic with the position taken by it, comprising virtually the entire southern constituency of the New School Church, withdrew and formed a new body,

¹²Robert Ellis Thompson, *A History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States*, pp. 370-372.

¹³*Minutes of the General Assembly* (O.S.), 1846, pp. 206-207.

¹⁴*Minutes of the General Assembly* (N.S.), 1885, pp. 30, 31.

known as the "United Synod of the Presbyterian Church."¹⁵ "Thus, before political convulsions had occurred to rend the Church through the State," remarks Gillett, "the New School Assembly had defined its position, had attained internal harmony, and had thrown off an incubus which for years had oppressed it and crippled its energies."¹⁶

Work for the Slave and Free Negroes

Preaching and the imparting of religious instruction to the slaves made up the total contribution of the Presbyterian Church to the Negroes of the South prior to the Civil War and emancipation. Under the system of slavery, as operated in America, with restrictions growing more and more severe with the passing of the years, more could not have been expected. No Church could do more than that. Schools were found occasionally, to be sure, as in Charleston during the early period, but they were for free Negroes and were not operated by the churches.

It is an abiding glory, which the whole Presbyterian Church now proudly shares, that during all of the years of slavery there were those of her communion who gave themselves magnificently to the work of preaching and teaching the gospel to the slaves. Some of her ablest preachers freely gave themselves to this service. Itinerant missionaries and settled pastors ministered to the slaves, while presbyteries and synods were constantly reminding masters of their obligations as Christians to provide religious instruction for those whom they held in bondage. It was the unswerving, unwearying devotion of choice individuals, far more than mere pious sentimentality, which showed that it was to them at least a most exalted aim and purpose.

A clear index of this spirit is given in the Assembly's narrative of 1825. It says, "No more honored name can be conferred on a minister of Jesus Christ than that of Apostle to the American slaves; and no service can be more pleasing to the God of heaven or more useful to our beloved country than that which this title designates."¹⁷ Dr. Weatherford rightly says, "Perhaps no group of Christians worked harder or more intelligently to give their slaves every advantage of Christian instruction."¹⁸ Truly, as the contrast is considered between official Presbyterian painful hesitancy of expression against slavery and individual Presbyterian energetic enterprise

¹⁵Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

¹⁶E. H. Gillett, *History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, 1864, Vol. II, p. 558.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 242.

¹⁸Weatherford and Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

for the slaves, one can quite feelingly say of the Church: warmer, greater, more Christlike by far than her head was her heart.

The first recorded preacher to the slaves was Samuel Davies, who commenced his work in Hanover County, Virginia, in 1747. Said to be, after Whitefield, the most eloquent preacher of his age, he became in later years the successor of Jonathan Edwards as president of Nassau Hall (now Princeton). While he did not preach exclusively to the slaves, many were numbered in his congregations. He is said to have baptized forty of them during his first three years in Virginia. Associated with him were John Todd, Robert Henry, and Henry Patillo.

In 1783 there journeyed across the mountains from Virginia to Kentucky a man whose name was destined to be long remembered in the Presbyterian annals of the latter state. He was David Rice. Already fifty years of age, he had rendered valuable service as a missionary in Virginia and North Carolina. But "Father" Rice, as he came later and affectionately to be called, was to spend thirty-three more of his years in active, fruitful service. He preached to the slaves during the earlier part of his life and was definitely against slavery, as his pamphlet, *Slavery Inconsistent with Justice and Good Policy*, attests. It was published in 1792 and was scattered widely. To his influence may be attributed the strong sentiment against slavery that developed early and long characterized the Presbyterians of Kentucky.¹⁹

Joseph Bullen in 1799 journeyed through the South, under the direction of the New York Missionary Society, on a mission to the Chickasaw Indians. His greatest success is reported to have been among the slaves, some of whom he baptized. Bullen's journey is memorable for another reason: on his way back to the North he met Gideon Blackburn and interested him in the work among the Indians. Blackburn later entered this service and labored with such telling effectiveness that he has been rightly acclaimed "a worthy successor to the Brainards"²⁰—famed pioneer missionary brothers.

Negroes are first specifically mentioned in the Minutes of the Presbyterian General Assembly of 1800, when they, with others who were deprived of "the means of grace," are spoken of as being objects of the missionary work of the Church. The same year Joseph Badger, who was sent out as a missionary by the Connecticut Association, reported that there was "no Christian in the region of Detroit except one black man, who appeared pious."²¹

¹⁹ Gillett, *op. cit.*, pp. 404, 405.

²⁰ Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

²¹ *Minutes of the General Assembly*, 1800, pp. 195-197.

✓ In 1801 there took place an event of real significance when John Chavis, styled "a black man of prudence and piety," was employed by the Church as "the Assembly's missionary among the people of his own color" in Virginia.²² This action of the General Assembly is important not alone because Chavis was a Negro, but because he was the first missionary of any race to be sent exclusively to Negroes, thereby bringing the whole race, bond and free, into a more direct and helpful relationship with the Church as objects of its missionary thought and enterprise. Chavis was re-appointed missionary for a number of years. John H. Rice, afterward one of the most distinguished men in the Church in his day, began his ministry as a missionary to the Negroes. He was appointed in 1806 and served seven years.²³

✓ Possibly the most fruitful missionary activity of the Presbyterian Church during this entire period can be traced to the missionary tour of Samuel J. Mills, of whom we shall write again later on, and John H. Schermerhorn. They set out in 1812, under the sponsorship of a group of New England missionary associations, to tour the western and southwestern frontiers. Preaching and baptizing as they went, they met all classes of men and women: hardy frontiersmen, Indians, Negroes. The journey required three full years for completion. Upon their return they described so vividly the urgent needs of the vast area still untouched that the zeal of the whole Church was fired and a new impulse given to missions. Among those who followed Mills and Schermerhorn as missionaries, Ezra Fisk and Elias Cornelius were noteworthy. It is not too much to say that these men mentioned, though unquestionably of front rank, were typical of their unrecorded fellow missionaries in their energies for the evangelization of the slave.

✓ Perhaps the finest effort to evangelize the slave was attempted by The Association for the Religious Instruction of Negroes. The moving spirit of this work, which was commenced in 1832, was Charles C. Jones, a Presbyterian minister, who afterward became one of the heads of the mission work of the Church. A feature of the work was the use of a catechism prepared especially for the slaves. Although the work of the association itself was confined to Liberty County, Georgia, the patterns developed were put into practice in many of the southern states before the end of slavery.²⁴

²² *Minutes of the General Assembly*, 1801, pp. 229, 233.

²³ Ashbel Green, *Presbyterian Missions*, 1893, p. 8.

²⁴ Henry A. White, *Southern Presbyterian Leaders*, 1911, p. 293.

Presbyterian Activity in Benevolent Enterprises

Two movements of major importance, both of which had as their chief aim the emancipation of the Negro, were definitely launched between 1810 and 1820. The first of these was the "Union Humane Society," or, as it was frequently called, "The Emancipation Society," founded by Benjamin Lundy, the Quaker, in 1815. Branches of this society increased rapidly for ten years, especially in the South. Gillett states that of the 101 anti-slavery societies in the country in 1826 less than one-fourth were in northern states.²⁵ The movement was then considered respectable and commanded tolerance if not interest and support. And because of the peaceable methods employed and the gradual measures proposed, ministers and church members were led to unite with the movement.

It is not possible to estimate the number of Presbyterians who cooperated with these societies, but it is quite safe to say that the total was not small. Moreover, it is revealing to discover from various sources that so many who lived amid scenes of slavery felt its curse and were led to give themselves to its removal from the land. Such a man was John Barr, a slaveholder in North Carolina, who, becoming convinced of its wrong, liberated his slaves with the offer of homes either in Liberia or in the great Northwest and moved with his family to Illinois.²⁶ The most notable of these, however, in the light of his later fame, was James G. Birney. He was an elder in the Presbyterian Church of Huntsville, Alabama, and a slaveholder when he was "converted" by Theodore Weld, the real founder of the later Abolition Movement.²⁷ Birney disposed of his slaves, moved his family to a free state, and devoted the rest of his life to the eradication of slavery in America.

The second movement is most familiarly known as "The Colonization Society." For more than sixty years it occupied a large place in the thought of American life. Its stated purpose was "to settle the free Negroes of the country, with their consent, in Africa or such other place as Congress shall deem most expedient."²⁸ The society was organized in 1816, with Robert Finley, a distinguished Presbyterian minister, its founder. Although established as a secular movement, it counted among its supporters some of the most distinguished churchmen of the day, and some of the most earnest friends of Negro freedom as well. Presbyterians especially were active in its support. Assembly after Assembly approved it. Two

²⁵ Gillett, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 523.

²⁶ *Presbyterian Historical Almanac*, 1863, p. 287.

²⁷ Gilbert H. Barnes, *Anti-Slavery Impulse*, 1934, pp. 39, 70.

²⁸ Minutes of the first meeting of the Colonization Society, 1818.

Presbyterian ministers were among its first directors, while one of the first two agents of the society was none other than Samuel J. Mills. It is tragic to record that neither Finley nor Mills was permitted to go on with this work. Finley, after accepting the presidency of the University of Georgia, died in 1817, while Mills, on a mission to Africa to find a place for the Colonization Society settlement, was stricken with fever and died, but not before the site of the present Liberia had been selected. While the society did not accomplish the full measure of its purpose and judgments may greatly question the essential soundness of that purpose, two of its achievements cannot be gainsaid: it was the direct instrument through which the Negro Republic of Liberia was established, and it had its influence in America in bringing about the emancipation of the slave.

Presbyterian Interest in Negro Schools

V The absence of schools for Negroes in the South before the emancipation has been pointed out in these pages. True it is that in many parts of the South, in spite of prohibitory laws, Negroes were able to learn to read and write. But, except in the rarest of cases, this was all. Moreover, most of the schools of the North were closed to the Negro either by the school authorities themselves or because of opposition from those around. Miss Prudence Crandall, a Quaker, was arrested and forced to abandon her school for girls at Canterbury, Connecticut, because she admitted a Negro girl, while the Canaan Academy, in New Hampshire, was broken up because two Negro men were permitted to enroll.²⁹ In the light of these conditions three attempts of Presbyterians to establish schools for Negroes are interesting and important.

The African School at Parsippany. In 1816 the Synod of New York and New Jersey appointed twelve of its members "to organize and manage" a school to give ministerial training to Negroes for service in Africa. The school was organized and located at Parsippany, New Jersey. Two young men were enrolled in 1817, and the same year the tireless Samuel J. Mills was chosen to collect subscriptions for the school. From his interest in missions and his deep devotion to the cause of the Negro, it can safely be inferred that he was a prime mover in this enterprise. It is interesting to find that Robert Finley, the founder of the Colonization Society, was a member of this synod and pastor of a church in New Jersey. An increasing interest was reported in 1818, but the death of Mills in Africa was a heavy blow. Four new scholarships were obtained, and six pupils

²⁹Weatherford and Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 351. Also Carter G. Woodson, *The Negro Church*, 1929, p. 175.

enrolled in 1821. In 1822 the synod was divided, each state forming its own body. The African school was given to the care of both groups. The Synod of New York in 1823 appointed a committee to raise funds for a professorship in the school. It is reported that a controversy arose on the question of loyalty to doctrinal standards; whatever the cause, the little school was unable to weather the storm and in 1824 closed its doors.⁸⁰

The New Haven College Project. To Arthur Tappan is due the distinction of endeavoring to establish the New Haven College, the most ambitious undertaking for Negro education before the Civil War. The Tappan brothers, Arthur and Lewis, wealthy merchants of New York, were probably the most unselfish philanthropists of their day in America, and, although Presbyterians, extended their encouragement and support far beyond denominational boundaries. Through Benjamin Lundy, the Quaker abolitionist who also influenced William Lloyd Garrison, they were led to cooperate in efforts to aid the Negro. This they did, and to such an extent that friends were impelled to caution them that such actions would ruin their business. To this Arthur Tappan is reported to have replied, "My business is for sale, but not my conscience."⁸¹

In 1828, while spending the summer in New Haven, Arthur Tappan met a home missionary, Simeon S. Jocelyn, who was serving a congregation of Negroes there. To him Jocelyn outlined a plan which he had conceived for a Negro college. Mr. Tappan became interested, bought several acres of ground, and pledged, with his brother, a large contribution for buildings. At first the leading citizens of New Haven appeared to be favorable to the plan. Members of the faculty of Yale agreed to teach. Much publicity attended the efforts. In 1831, encouraged and financially supported by Arthur Tappan, a "Convention of Colored Citizens of America" was held in Philadelphia, the first meeting of its kind. The convention enthusiastically endorsed the proposed college and elected Samuel E. Cornish, a Negro Presbyterian minister, as "Convention Agent" to solicit funds. Arthur Tappan was chosen treasurer.

Jocelyn returned to New Haven only to find that a decided change of sentiment had taken place. On September 10, 1831, at a meeting called to decide upon the matter, a large number of the citizens of New Haven, including the mayor, aldermen, Common Council, and others, adopted a resolution which stated, "We will resist the establishment of the proposed

⁸⁰ *Minutes of Synod of New York and New Jersey, 1816-1823.*

⁸¹ Dwight O. W. Holmes, *Straight Ahead*, p. 7. (An excerpt from *The Evolution of the Negro College*, published by Teachers College, Columbia University in 1934.)

college in this place by every lawful means in our power." Thus ended the Negro college.³²

Ashmun Institute. "An institution," says Emerson, "is the lengthened shadow of one man." If this be true, then Ashmun Institute and its successor, the present Lincoln University, are but visible reflections of the purpose and prayer and faith, even the dream, that possessed Dr. John Miller Dickey, a Presbyterian minister of Oxford, Pennsylvania, the founder of the oldest institution for the higher education of the Negro in our land. The event that led to the establishment of the school has been recorded. In 1852, a young Negro, James Ralston Amos, came to the home of Dr. Dickey, seeking his counsel and aid that he might receive training to preach to his people.³³ This providential incident so fired the zeal, long deeply burning, of Dr. Dickey that he set about to find a school that would admit young Amos; he was successful, but only after repeated failures. As a result he determined to found a school for Negro youth. A site was selected and procured by Dr. Dickey out of his own funds; the next year saw the plan presented to the General Assembly, being recommended by the Board of Education of the Church through Dr. Courtland Van Rensselaer, long a friend of the Negro cause. The Presbytery of New Castle, in the bounds of which the school was to be located, gave its approval and empowered its own members to aid in establishing the work. Funds were obtained, a building erected, and the institute, named in honor of Jehudi Ashmun, one of the early leaders of Liberia, became a reality.

Ashmun Institute began its work on January 1, 1857, with four students. Dr. Dickey lived until 1878 to direct the work that he began and to see it emerge as Lincoln University, but of it we shall write later from the vantage point of a later day.

✓ Negro Presbyterian Ministers

John Chavis. In any record of notable American Negroes of the period prior to the Civil War the name of John Chavis is conspicuous. Born, whether slave or free is not known, in Granville County, North Carolina, in 1763, he early exhibited such mental gifts that, through the interest of white friends, he was sent to Princeton. There, under the tutelage of Dr. John Witherspoon, he became proficient, especially in Latin and Greek. His appointment as the first Negro missionary in the Presbyterian Church has already been noted. Ashbel Green states that even before Chavis had been employed "as a missionary among the blacks by the Synod of Vir-

³² Barnes, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-28.

³³ George B. Carr, *John Miller Dickey, His Life and Times*, 1929, pp. 161 ff.

ginia,"³⁴ he also had the distinction of being the first Negro Presbyterian minister, having been ordained by the Presbytery of Lexington. There is no record of his having held a pastorate, though Dr. George C. Shaw, in his book on Chavis, says that for a time Chavis supplied the pulpit of a white Presbyterian church in the same county in which he was born. As a result of Nat Turner's insurrection in 1831, preaching by Negroes was prohibited in most of the southern states. Chavis then turned his attention to teaching, and with such eminent success that it is upon his work as a teacher that his fame chiefly rests.

✓ *John Gloucester and the First African Presbyterian Church.* The story of John Gloucester is greatly worth the telling. Of his early life nothing is known until, as a slave in Tennessee, he came under the notice of Gideon Blackburn, the great missionary to the Indians. Blackburn, attracted by what he saw of promise in the man, bought him and, carrying him as a servant on his missionary travels, instructed him in the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church. By his teaching Gloucester became an earnest and acceptable preacher. Coming to Philadelphia with his master, he was given an opportunity to preach and to gather a congregation of Negroes. It is said that he began preaching in a private house, and in clear weather, on a street corner. He soon won the respect of all classes. "Even the dram shops would close their doors until the meeting was over."

The First African Church was organized the latter part of May, 1807. During this time Blackburn, with true Christian benevolence, gave Gloucester his freedom. Later, through the contributions of friends in England and America, Gloucester was able to purchase the freedom of his wife and children. In 1810 he was ordained by the Presbytery of Union, in Tennessee. Through the interest and support of The Evangelical Society of Philadelphia a house of worship was erected and dedicated in 1811. Dr. Archibald Alexander, a noted Presbyterian minister of the day, and a friend and helper of the work from the beginning, preached the sermon. Success attended the ministry of John Gloucester, and he had the joyous privilege of presenting two young Negro men to his presbytery and of seeing them placed under its care. The church prospered until his death in 1822. During the comparatively brief years of his ministry, he had gathered a congregation; he had shaped and molded his people; he had laid a foundation that was to endure even to this day. But even this does not end the story; John Gloucester was still to serve through the ministry of his sons.

In 1824 the Presbytery of Philadelphia set apart another Negro church in that city, the Second African Presbyterian Church, and *Jeremiah Glou-*

³⁴Green, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

cester, son of John, became its minister. The church flourished for many years. In 1844 another Negro church was established in Philadelphia, the Lombard Street Central Presbyterian Church, and *Stephen Gloucester*, also a son of John, became its minister. In 1848, the Negro Presbyterian Church of Reading, Pennsylvania, was organized by Stephen Gloucester, and it is reported that *James Gloucester*, still another son of John, was the founder of Siloam Church in Brooklyn, New York. Thus, because of his own great service and because of his sons, there are few names among Negro Presbyterians that merit a higher place than that of John Gloucester, the founder.³⁵ It is most appropriate that a Negro Presbyterian Church in Boston bears his name.

Samuel E. Cornish. One of the young men presented by John Gloucester to the Presbytery of Philadelphia, Samuel E. Cornish, was licensed by that presbytery and ordained by a New York presbytery. In 1824 he became the first pastor of the First Colored Presbyterian Church of New York City and remained until 1828. In 1840 he united with another presbytery in the same city and, while laboring as a missionary, he organized the Emanuel Church, the second Negro Presbyterian church in New York City. He served this church until 1847. One of the most active men of his day, Samuel E. Cornish had the honor of establishing, with John Russworm, the first Negro newspaper to be published in the United States, *Freedom's Journal*, in 1827.³⁶ In 1837 he became editor of another weekly Negro paper, *The Weekly Advocate*. It will be recalled that Cornish was chosen in 1831 as agent to collect funds for the ill-fated New Haven college.³⁷

The careers of *Henry Highland Garnett* and *J. W. C. Pennington*, who were among the most outstanding Negroes of their day, in many respects were similar. Both were born as slaves in Maryland; both escaped to the more friendly North, gained their education, and became Presbyterian ministers and distinguished orators. Pennington was impressive for his scholarship as well as for his eloquence. He visited Europe three times as a lecturer, remaining four years on one of these visits, preaching and lecturing with great acceptance. In 1849 he preached, by invitation, at the Protestant Church in Paris and made a profound impression. He is said to have been a brilliant master of Latin, Greek, and German, and, in recognition of his scholarship, the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by the University of Heidelberg. Garnett won na-

³⁵ William T. Catto, *Semi-Centennial Address*, 1857, *passim*.

³⁶ Weatherford and Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 484.

³⁷ *Ante*, p. 18.

tional fame by an address on freedom delivered at Buffalo, New York, in 1843 before the Congress of Colored Americans. He subsequently lectured in England and was warmly received. He served for a time as a missionary to Jamaica. Garnett is said to have served Negro Presbyterian congregations in Washington, D. C., and Troy, New York, while Pennington served with great favor a Congregational church in Hartford, Connecticut. Each served as pastor of the First Colored Presbyterian Church of New York (the name of the church was changed to "Shiloh"). Pennington served from 1848 to 1856, while Garnett, succeeding him in 1856, continued until 1864. Garnett began a second pastorate at the Shiloh Church in 1867 and served for fourteen years.³⁸

Samuel R. Ward. Minister, lecturer, and popular orator, Ward is reported to have "preached with great acceptance" to a white Presbyterian church at South Butler, New York, for a number of years. Well-trained, and a gifted speaker, he employed most of his time from 1840 as a lecturer, covering America and visiting England. He was a contemporary of Frederick Douglass and ranked with him as one of the most popular orators of the day.³⁹

Of course there were others: men like *Elymas P. Rogers*, who served the Plane Street Church of Newark, New Jersey, for fourteen years with signal success, but refused to be installed as pastor, feeling impelled to preach the gospel in Africa. A strain of pathos enters the story as we learn that he gave up his work in 1861 and journeyed to Africa, but was not suffered to live even two months after setting foot upon "the loved land of his fathers."⁴⁰ And there was *John William Holm*, a young man of rare brilliance, who, after spending two years at Ashmun Institute, entered Auburn Seminary in 1861, was licensed the next year by the Presbytery of Cayuga, and was serving during the summer as a supply of the Siloam Church in Brooklyn when he sickened and quickly died. Young Holm had made a deep impression upon the faculty and students of Auburn, and, when they returned to the seminary that fall, they held a memorial service out of their affectionate regard for him.⁴¹

There also are those who to a later day are but little more than dimly-perceived names. Gillett gives us one, a *George Erskine*,⁴² who was appointed to serve four months under the direction of the East Tennessee

³⁸Carter G. Woodson, *The Negro in Our History*, pp. 275 ff. Also S. D. Alexander, *The Presbytery of New York*, 1887, pp. 44 ff.

³⁹Woodson, *The Negro Church*, pp. 182, 183.

⁴⁰*Presbyterian Historical Almanac*, 1862, pp. 191-194.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 1864, p. 304.

⁴²Gillett, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

Missionary Society. This occurred in 1818, and he was reappointed in 1819, but the record does not speak again. There are names such as *Benjamin Hughes* and *W. T. Catto*, who served as ministers of the First African Church of Philadelphia, and *Theodore Wright* of the First Colored Church in New York, who withdrew with his congregation from one presbytery to another. Could we but catch a glimpse of the mystery behind these names we should have a far more glorious picture, for these names were men!

We find one name, however, which because of subsequent events, has particular significance. The General Assembly Minutes (O. S.) of 1861 carry the name of *H. R. Revels*, as pastor of the Madison Street Presbyterian Church, Colored, of Baltimore.⁴³ Other authentic sources reveal that H. R. Revels was born free, was a graduate of Knox College in Illinois, entered the ministry of the African Methodist Church, and served important charges in several states; that he resigned his church in St. Louis, came to Maryland and was there at the outbreak of the Civil War, and helped to organize the first Negro Regiment in Maryland.⁴⁴ From an historical sketch of the Madison Street Church we find that Revels served as assistant pastor of this church, with pastoral responsibility for a mission, Govan's Chapel, from April 27, 1858, to October 14, 1863. The significance of the name becomes apparent and of considerable importance when we discover that the H. R. Revels who served five years as the assistant pastor of a Presbyterian church became in 1870 Hiram R. Revels of Mississippi, the first Negro to be chosen a member of the Senate of the United States.

Negro Presbyterian Churches and Members

As far as can be verified, there was only one Negro Presbyterian church building in the South at the beginning of the Civil War, and the circumstances of its origin and life make an unusual story. In 1846 Dr. John B. Adger, pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church of Charleston, South Carolina, conceived the plan of holding separate services for the Negro slaves, and the basement of his church was taken over for the purpose. The idea proved to be popular; large numbers attended the services, and Sunday schools and prayer meetings were conducted regularly at various points throughout the city. The next year the congregation of the Second Church decided to build a house of worship for the use of the slaves. This was done, and in 1850 the building, a "T" shaped structure, was dedicated. Shortly afterward, Dr. Adger resigned his pastorate to accept a professor-

⁴³*Minutes of the General Assembly (O.S.)*, 1861, p. 65.

⁴⁴Woodson, *The Negro Church*, p. 184.

ship in the theological seminary at Columbia, South Carolina, and John L. Girardeau came to the Second Church, assuming charge at the same time of the Negro church. Under the preaching of Dr. Girardeau, who was reputed to be one of the most eloquent of southern preachers, the slave church soon outgrew its quarters. An immense structure was erected, costing \$25,000, said to have been the largest in the city. This new church was given over to the use of the slaves, and Dr. Girardeau preached to them until the outbreak of the Civil War. The name given to this church was "Zion." It stands today as the oldest Negro Presbyterian Church in the South.⁴⁵

There were, in 1860, between twelve and fourteen Negro Presbyterian churches in the North. We can locate, with reasonable certainty, twelve of those churches. The existence in 1860 of another, the Second African Church of Philadelphia, is uncertain, while Govan's Chapel in Baltimore was classified as a mission. Names and locations follow:

| <i>Name of Church</i> | <i>City</i> | <i>State</i> |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Shiloh | New York | New York |
| Seventh Avenue | New York | New York |
| Siloam | Brooklyn | New York |
| Colored | Troy | New York |
| Plane Street | Newark | New Jersey |
| Witherspoon Street | Princeton | New Jersey |
| First African | Philadelphia | Pennsylvania |
| Second African (?) | Philadelphia | Pennsylvania |
| Lombard Street Central | Philadelphia | Pennsylvania |
| Capital Street | Harrisburg | Pennsylvania |
| Colored | Reading | Pennsylvania |
| Madison Street | Baltimore | Maryland |
| Govan's Chapel (Mission) | Baltimore | Maryland |
| Colored | Washington | D. C. |

An interesting development as to the names of some of these churches may be noted. The church given here as Shiloh was originally The First Colored Presbyterian Church of New York. The original name of The Seventh Avenue Church was Emanuel; this church subsequently took the name The Church of the Covenant, and still later, The Church of Hope. The name of The Plane Street Church, Newark, was changed to

⁴⁵White, *op. cit.*, pp. 293-304.

The Thirteenth Avenue Presbyterian Church, which name it bears to the present day.

It is probably beyond the realm of possibility to estimate with accuracy the number of Negro Presbyterians in the North in the year 1860. One hesitates even to essay an opinion, but, if one be offered, it is to the effect that the total Negro Presbyterian membership in the North in Negro churches, listed on another page, and in the white churches was relatively very small.

As for Negro Presbyterian membership in the South, which would be made up very largely of slaves, the figures submitted can best serve as a very general and superficial estimate.

Slaves reported as belonging to Presbyterian churches in the South in 1858 number as follows:⁴⁶

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| Old School Churches..... | 12,000 |
| New School Churches..... | 2,000 |
| Cumberland Churches | 20,000 |
| <hr/> | |
| Total slave membership..... | 34,000 |

⁴⁶*The Presbyterian Magazine*, 1858, p. 567.

2. Organization

THE CHALLENGE OF EMANCIPATION

1861-1890

IT WAS IN AN ATMOSPHERE of greatest tension and suspense that the Old School Assembly of 1861 met to do its work. Secession from the Union had come; Fort Sumter had fallen; war had been declared; President Lincoln had issued the first call for volunteers. Encouraged by the fact that the previous Assembly had been tranquil and "exceptionally harmonious,"¹ there were those in the Church and in the Assembly who still hoped that the Assembly would take no action of a disturbing nature; they still fancied that the southern constituency might be saved to the Church. However mistaken the judgment and misplaced the confidence of this group, of which Dr. Charles Hodge of Princeton was the very able spokesman, it must be conceded that they were at least consistent: for fifteen years, or since the utterance of 1846, they had succeeded in excluding any word against slavery, or upon any matter disturbing to the slaveholding South, from the actions of the Assembly.

On this occasion, however, they reckoned without foundation. Silence would no longer satisfy. As Vander Velde well comments: "The Assembly (of 1861) was to prove in case after case that when a man's nationalism conflicted with his natural conservatism, it was the conservatism that had to give way."² Thus, with unprecedented enthusiasm, and by a decisive vote, albeit after a debate that lasted five days, the Old School Assembly adopted the historic Spring Resolutions, the inspiration of the venerable Dr. Gardiner S. Spring, pastor of the Brick Church in New York City and long one of the ablest and most respected leaders of the denomination. By these resolutions the Church was committed "to strengthen, uphold, and encourage the Federal Government," and to an "unabated loyalty" to

¹Vander Velde, *The Presbyterian Churches and the Federal Union, 1861-1869*, 1932, p. 29.

²*Ibid.*, p. 48.

the Federal Constitution.³ The historic importance of the Spring Resolutions is not found in the resolutions themselves, nor yet by a comparison with the utterances of other churches at this time. Their importance rests chiefly upon the fact that they were distinctly an advance step for the staid, ultra-conservative Old School Church of that period and that they prepared the way for later advances. Fortified by the favorable reaction of their constituents and of the country in general, and at the same time remembering that the seceding states had formed another "country," succeeding Assemblies were increasingly vocal and emphatic until the close of the war.

The end of the same year, which for the Old School Church had been made epochal by its adoption of the Spring Resolutions, witnessed the withdrawal of the Old School southern constituency and the organization of The Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America. This was effected on December 4, 1861, at Augusta, Georgia. At its beginning the new group comprised 10 synods, 45 presbyteries, and numbered 840 ministers and 72,000 communicants. Its geographical boundaries corresponded exactly with those of the seceding states. This church came early to be popularly known as the "Southern Presbyterian Church," although its official title was changed in 1865, when it determined to maintain permanently its separate status, to The Presbyterian Church in the United States. As to the influence of the Spring Resolutions on the establishment of a separate Southern church, it is undoubtedly true that the resolutions served to provide an outward basis for secession and to hasten positive action; but weightier judgment supports the view that the Old School position was not the paramount factor and that the withdrawal of the Southern churches was inevitable.⁴

On the question of slavery the Assemblies of the Old School Church, even during the war period, kept strictly silent until 1863, five months after the Emancipation Proclamation had become effective. And as for the action of that year, it would have been far better to have kept to the policy of utter silence than to have adopted what has been appropriately called "a masterpiece of equivocation and indefiniteness." Of all the actions of the Old School, its position on slavery in 1863 can be the least understood, appreciated, or justified. In 1864 it took its final action on the subject, and pronounced a clear, vigorous, and emphatic condemnation of slavery. To its weight was added the fact that it was adopted with almost entire unanimity. However, with the slaves already freed, with victory attending the Union arms, and the early end of the war reasonably assured,

³*Ibid.*, pp. 48-65 for fuller treatment.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 101-106.

such a tardy deliverance, however able, did not and could not greatly contribute to the prestige of the Old School Church.

In marked contrast were the meetings of the New School Church. Their Assemblies enjoyed internal harmony and showed vigorous action. The major reason for this is to be found in the withdrawal in 1857 of its Southern constituency, as has already been noted. The direct consequence of this separation, which involved six Southern synods, was to leave the New School body almost a completely Northern church. Thus the New School Church could take a united and emphatic position in an avowal of loyalty to the Union and in condemnation of slavery.

Before the Spring Resolutions had been even permitted to reach the floor of the Old School Assembly, the New School Assembly, which had convened on the same day as the Old, had adopted an able recommendation that in ringing words pledged its loyalty to the Union cause: "There is no blood or treasure too precious," it declared, "to be devoted to the defense and perpetuity of the Government in all its constituted authority." Prayer for the President and those in authority, and for the removal of slavery was commended to pastors and churches. In 1862, preceding the Emancipation Proclamation by four months, was issued a scathing denunciation of slavery, declaring it to be the "one primordial root . . . of the whole insurrectionary movement." Deliverances of the following years maintained their assurance of loyalty and bore a new note of gladness for the "breaking of the yoke of oppression," and the "complete destruction of the vile system of human bondage." Through these years these deliverances were sent or carried to the President of the United States and distributed by the newspapers throughout the land. There can be no doubt that the spiritual and moral influence of the New School Presbyterian Church served to strengthen the country in her time of crisis.⁵

The Challenge of Emancipation

The proclamation of President Lincoln, decreeing in effect that on January 1, 1863, slavery should cease to exist in America, set in motion one of the major events of history. Other movements of population and mass changes of status, from freedom to bondage or from bondage to freedom, there had been, but not in such vast numbers; rarely with such sudden immediacy; never with conditions and factors such as were found in the case of the Negro in America. Let us endeavor to visualize the situation: four million Negroes, ignorant, uncouth, their habits and customs molded and machined and grooved into a slave experience of 250 years, are sud-

⁵Vander Velde, *op. cit.*, pp. 344 ff.

denly set free, without food, shelter, clothing, tools, or land, and are destined to live in a region impoverished by war and by the side of their conquered former masters.

This then is the setting, the basis of the challenge that came, with the coming of freedom to the Negro slave, to all America. It came to every part and phase and factor of American life: legal, economic, civic, social, educational. And it was a challenge to religion most of all, to the forces of Christianity in our land. By the end of the Civil War all of the northern churches had definitely committed themselves against slavery. All had expressed some measure of interest and compassion for the truly helpless condition of the slave. The emancipation, although at first purely a war measure, had been made certain by the success of the Union cause. Whatever hindrances or barriers there had been between the churches and the Negro were now removed by the fact of freedom. The Christian churches, aware of the plight of the newly-made freedmen, were challenged definitely and strongly.

In the succeeding pages we shall endeavor to show how one of the Christian churches of America met the challenge of the emancipation. Were it possible to gather up the fruits of all of the American churches that engaged in this service, such a story would add an impressive chapter to the Christian annals of our day. But such is manifestly beyond the confines of this study. Consequently we shall confine ourselves largely to the work of the Old School and New School branches of the Presbyterian Church until their reunion in 1870. After that period we shall use the term, "The Presbyterian Church," to indicate the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., using the proper qualifying term to identify the other Presbyterian branches to which we may refer.

Laying the Foundations

It may not be amiss here to establish the fact that neither the Old School nor the New School branches led in work among freedmen. This distinction belongs to other Presbyterian groups. The first Presbyterian branch to begin work among the Negroes during this period was one of the smallest, the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, or, as they are more usually called, the "Old Side Covenanters." They began in 1861 by sending a missionary to Port Royal, South Carolina, and afterward established missions in Washington, D. C., and Natchez, Mississippi.⁶ The United Presbyterian Church began its work in 1863. The first report, in 1864, showed six

⁶*Presbyterian Historical Almanac*, 1863, p. 396.

stations, with twenty-four teachers, and an expenditure of \$8,000. Their first stations were placed in Tennessee and Alabama. Though they experienced difficulties, some of their work being destroyed, they persisted and established the basis of their small but substantial work of the present day.⁷

Activities of Old School Presbyterians among freedmen were commenced in 1864, when the General Assembly appointed two committees, one in Indianapolis and the other in Philadelphia, for this work. They were empowered "to collect and disburse funds, and to appoint teachers and ministers," but were "allowed in no wise to interfere with the plans or work of the Board of Domestic Missions."⁸ Very few, if any, results came from the activities of these committees, so the next year the Assembly, aware of the urgency of the situation, appointed a committee consisting of nine ministers and nine elders, to be "style[d] the General Assembly's Committee on Freedmen."⁹ This committee was located at Pittsburgh and to it were given the religious and educational interests of the freedmen "during the present exigencies and until the Assembly shall otherwise order." The actual work of the Old School branch may properly be said to have begun with the appointment of this committee. The statement that authorized the work in 1865 declared it the duty of the Presbyterian Church "as patriots, as philanthropists and as Christians at once to enter upon and vigorously to cultivate the field that God has opened before them." And so vigorously did they enter the field that by 1870, in just five years, they had firmly established the beginnings of much of the work of the present day.

New School Presbyterians began, also in 1864, by directing their Home Missions Committee to seek to effect arrangements through which the "institutions of the Gospel may be given to the large and increasing number of Freedmen . . . emancipated—during the present Civil War." The next year the committee recommended that agents be appointed to work among freedmen and suggested that colored men be chosen, if possible.¹⁰ While the committee was able to report the organization of three promising missions among freedmen in 1866, the lack of colored ministers served to hinder the progress. It was not until 1868 that an associate secretary was employed for the work and a Freedmen's Department created. The reports of 1869 and 1870 showed splendid progress.

Let us trace more directly some of the beginnings of the work of the Old

⁷ Vander Velde, *op. cit.*, p. 453.

⁸ *Minutes of the General Assembly* (O.S.), 1864, pp. 321-323.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1865, pp. 543-545.

¹⁰ *Minutes of the General Assembly* (N.S.), 1864, p. 467.

School and the New School among freedmen.¹¹ There has come to light in recent years a story that Presbyterian work in the South among freedmen was begun in 1864,¹¹ at Amelia Court House, Virginia, by Mrs. Samantha J. Neil, white, and that under a venerable oak with spreading branches she taught her first class, composed of little children and gray-haired men and women, all eager for knowledge; and that from this foundation the Negro Presbyterian work in Virginia and especially Ingle-side Seminary have come.

Further testimony reveals vividly the beauty and importance of the story. Mrs. Neil was the wife of an officer in the Union Army who lost his life on a Virginia battlefield. On learning of his death, the young widow left her Pennsylvania home and journeyed to Amelia County, Virginia, in search of his body. She failed to find her loved one; she discovered, instead, her life's work. Mrs. Neil remained in Virginia the rest of her life, teaching and ministering to Negroes. Through her influence six Negro Presbyterian churches were established in Amelia and Nottoway Counties—the oldest of these churches is located on the very ground where Mrs. Neil organized her first class and bears appropriately the name "Big Oak." These churches flourish today in the midst of a thriving, home-owning and home-loving people among whom the memory of Samantha J. Neil is a blessed heritage.

The first work sponsored by the Old School Committee of which there is authentic record was begun in North Carolina in the vicinity of Charlotte, probably in January, 1866. Early that year two churches were organized: McClintock, with the Rev. S. C. Alexander as minister, and Freedom, with the Rev. S. S. Murkland in charge. These ministers, with a third, the Rev. W. L. Miller, organized the first presbytery among the freedmen, Catawba Presbytery, on October 4, 1866. These three ministers were white, the vanguard of a hard-working band of men and women that came later. The story of their entry into the freedmen's service is interesting: Murkland and Alexander were members of the Presbytery of Concord of the Southern Presbyterian Church. During the war they had been in charge of white congregations and had preached occasionally to Negroes. At the close of the war each had resigned from his white church and, gathering Negro congregations, had been commissioned by the Old School Committee. On learning that they had accepted commissions from the Old School Church, their presbytery gave them the choice of returning their commissions and refusing all aid from the North or of leaving the presbytery. They accepted the latter alternative and organized the Pres-

¹¹ *Annual Report*, Board of National Missions, 1927, p. 85.

bytery of Catawba under the Old School Church. This presbytery was first attached to the Synod of Baltimore. The next year Alexander was appointed by the new presbytery to "establish a Theological Class at Charlotte, the Henry J. Biddle Institute, in honor of Major Henry J. Biddle of Philadelphia, who lost his life in the Rebellion."¹²

The circumstances attending the organization of the second Old School presbytery among freedmen give it more than ordinary interest. In 1866 three Negro ministers, David Laney, Joseph Williams, and Robert Casters, all of Georgia, were ordained by the Presbytery of Hopewell of the Southern Church, "to labor among their own people." Evidently objecting to what to them appeared a qualified ordination, they withdrew and proceeded, probably in 1867, to organize an independent presbytery, the Presbytery of Knox. Upon the application of Dr. S. C. Logan, the first secretary of the Freedmen's Committee, Knox Presbytery was received by the Old School Assembly in 1868. It is interesting to find that the David Laney here mentioned was the father of Miss Lucy Laney, who in later years became the founder of Haines Institute, Augusta, Georgia.¹³

The next presbytery, Atlantic, came on January 1, 1868; it was located in lower South Carolina in the general vicinity of Charleston. The ministers making up this presbytery were of both races. Thus we find in the three presbyteries, the first three organized among freedmen in the Old School Church, this singular picture:

1866 Catawba Presbytery, North Carolina—Ministers all white

1867 Knox Presbytery, Georgia—Ministers all Negro

1868 Atlantic Presbytery, South Carolina—Ministers of both races

In 1868 the Old School Assembly gave authority for the formation of the first Negro synod "on Thursday before the second Sabbath of October, 1868, to be opened with a sermon by the Rev. Sidney S. Murkland, or in his absence by the oldest minister present."¹⁴ This synod was named Atlantic and was composed of the presbyteries of Catawba, Atlantic, and Knox. Thus by 1870 the advance guard of the Old School Presbyterians, beginning in North Carolina, had extended their operations to South Carolina and Georgia and had effected, through their presbyteries and synod, the means of establishing and extending their work.

Two schools above grade-school level were established in this five-year

¹² *Minutes of the General Assembly (O.S.)*, 1867, pp. 441-448.

¹³ *Minutes of the General Assembly (O.S.)*, 1868, p. 735. Also *The Assembly Herald*, 1908.

¹⁴ *Minutes of the General Assembly (O.S.)*, 1868, p. 650.

period: the Biddle Memorial Institute at Charlotte and Wallingford Academy at Charleston. Lincoln University in Pennsylvania was included in the report as was the Freedmen's University in Quindaro, Kansas, under the joint control of the Freedmen's Committee and the Synod of Kansas.

New School Activities. A study of the work of the New School Church among freedmen during this five-year period from 1865 to 1870 may well serve to correct a popular fallacy: that the activities of the New School were negligible. True it is that the Freedmen's Committee of the New School Church did not begin to operate until the middle of 1868 and that the sphere and volume of its activities were much smaller than those of its sister branch; yet in quality the work of the New School Church was of greatly significant value and much of its influence extends through to the present time.

The first work of the New School branch to be established among freedmen was probably at Knoxville, Tennessee, although a mission planted at Charleston, South Carolina, the same year flourished for a time but at length went out of existence. But the Knoxville church, established, it may be, as early as 1865, not only is the oldest living church of the Freedmen's work of the New School but can also strongly claim to be the first Negro church to be organized after the Civil War by either branch. The Knoxville Shiloh Church, organized by the Rev. George W. Le Vere, a Negro missionary, continues and is today one of the strongest Negro Presbyterian churches in the South. Le Vere, one of the first New School "agents" to be sent south, was active in establishing churches at Maryville and New Market, Tennessee, and a number of missions in the vicinity during this time. An interesting contrast may be noted: In Tennessee the New School work among freedmen was performed by Negroes and their churches were received into a white presbytery, Union, the same by which John Gloucester had been ordained more than a half century before.

Of more than ordinary interest is the fact that the illustrious Dr. J. W. C. Pennington, of whose career mention has previously been made, served in 1869 and 1870 as a New School missionary in Jacksonville, Florida, and it is highly probable that he organized the Negro Presbyterian church there. The report of 1871 tells of his death at Jacksonville while still in charge of this church. Another unusual character, Hiram Baker, who labored mightily throughout the South for a generation after the Civil War, organizing the church at Chattanooga as late as 1890, was a New School licentiate of the Presbytery of Carlisle in 1864.

In 1868 rather elaborate mission-school activities were undertaken by the New School Freedmen's Committee. After taking over a group of schools from another organization, the committee had a total of sixty-one schools scattered throughout nine states and the District of Columbia. The major work, however, was centered in South Carolina, with five active stations, and on May 11, 1869, the New School Presbytery of South Carolina was formed and attached to the Synod of New York and New Jersey. Seven ministers of both races were members. Among these seven are names that show beyond doubt the high quality of this work: Willard Richardson, from whose Fairfield Institute at Winnsboro, South Carolina, came the distinguished Dillard brothers; President Henry L. McCrorey of Johnson C. Smith University; and Dean Kelly Miller of Howard University. Samuel Loomis had already established Brainerd Institute at Chester, South Carolina. But perhaps of exceptional significance, in the light of things to be, was a name recorded upon the roster of the Presbytery of South Carolina in 1870 as a licentiate: Daniel J. Sanders, who was to become the first Negro president of Biddle University.

A View of the Work in 1870

The year 1870 marked the reunion of the Old School and the New School branches of the Church and the consolidation of the missionary activity of both branches, including the work among freedmen. From the last reports of each committee we are able to get a glimpse of the work as a whole.

The work of the Old School Committee extended throughout three states: North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, while Tennessee and South Carolina were mainly the field of New School activity. There were three presbyteries and one synod in the Old School field and one presbytery in the New School work. The Freedmen's Committee of the Old School reported sixty-nine churches, with 5,264 communicants; fifty-seven church buildings and eight manses or homes for teachers; seventy-six schools with 5,220 pupils, sixty-seven Sunday schools and 5,417 pupils; 146 marriages and 1,234 baptisms; Biddle, Wallingford, and the Freedmen's University were higher schools. Twenty-seven ministers, of whom fifteen were white and twelve Negro, were active; there were two licentiates and twenty-seven catechists, and 101 day school teachers.

There were probably sixteen New School churches, with 1,500 communicants; sixty-one schools with 185 teachers; there were six white ministers and two Negro, and five licentiates. There was a normal school

at Winchester, Virginia, with valuable property and with 4,000 pupils, in addition to the work at Chester and Winnsboro, South Carolina.

Before we leave this story of beginnings, two most important facts should be noted:

The Old School and the New School Churches, in beginning their activities for freedmen, not only were entering a new field but were at the same time attempting a new work, one with which they were utterly without experience. They had no analogies to follow; there were no precedents to lead them in their task. The freedmen, though emancipated, were overwhelmingly ignorant; without churches of their own, "they could not be induced to remain in the churches where they were not allowed equal privileges."¹⁵ The old ways of "evangelizing the slave" were definitely outmoded: of that there could be no possible doubt. Thus the problem of discovering the most effective approaches and of evolving a program best suited to the needs of the freedmen became the first task of those who sought to help them. And this task was by no means a small one.

The other factor was the truly critical state of the newly-emancipated race. The picturesque language of an early report vividly describes their plight: "The rags of their heathenism are neither worn nor thrown away." Emphasizing their migratory tendencies, it avers, "our missionaries preach as to running waters." The need, though dire, is not without hope; "the whole race is now as wax." And now a warning, which is repeated again and again through the years, "If the Church of God does not give them His Gospel, the Church of Rome will give them hers!" And one can feel the moving earnestness of this appeal: "Surely there is in this sin-burdened world today no company of the perishing whose claims are more pressing or important! Unforced as they are by the thunders of His voice who has shaken the nation, and before whose footsteps of power the bands, forged by Christian civilization through two centuries and a half, have fallen from the hands of four millions of people, as the rain drops from the leaves of the forest before the sweep of the wind."¹⁶

Standards and Policies

Presbyterian emphasis upon education and Presbyterian insistence upon a thoroughly trained ministry for its churches are proverbial, and it is to the glory of both branches that they adopted at the very start this same high standard for their work among the freedmen. Each branch had its

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1867, p. 445.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1867, p. 448.

cluster of mission schools, a school and a church together always, and at times schools where there were no churches. Each had prepared the groundwork for secondary schools, while the Old School Committee had commenced, it will be recalled, a school for the training of ministers before 1870. As early as 1868 the Old School Committee had declared, "It is the true policy of the Church to combine, as far as practicable, both parts of the work, evangelism and education," while in 1870 the object of the work was thus stated: "To cultivate intelligence and piety among the Freedmen of the South, by planting and maintaining where they live, the church and school conjointly."¹⁷ An illustration of the Presbyterian demand for a properly trained ministry is given in the action of the Old School Assembly in 1867 when a committee was appointed "to look into the matter of the licensure and ordination of Colored men."¹⁸ Although in 1868 the committee found it "inexpedient" to report, the Assembly, in approving the establishment of the first Negro synod the same year, advised the use of "great caution in licensing and ordaining Colored ministers."¹⁹ Thus, as a policy from the very beginning, the Presbyterian Church consciously and definitely chose as her contribution the training of freedmen through churches and schools, thereby aiding in the development of leaders of the race.

Progress from 1870 to 1890

By direction of the reunited Assembly in 1870 the work of the two Committees on Freedmen was merged and placed in the hands of a new committee to be located in Pittsburgh. A proposal to consolidate the Freedmen's work with that of the Board of Home Missions came before the Assembly of 1870 and was defeated, but it was destined to be heard again. In 1874 the Assembly voted to transfer some of the activities of the Freedmen's Committee to the Board of Home Missions, the transfer to take effect in 1879, but that year the Assembly decided to place all of the work in the hands of the Freedmen's Committee. In 1888 the same transfer was again considered, but the next year the Assembly showed a decided preference for continuance of the work without change. In the meantime the committee had received a charter for the work and was now the Board of Missions for Freedmen.

In 1870 the newly-organized Committee on Freedmen chose E. E. Swift as chairman and A. C. McClelland as secretary. These officers had served

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 1868, p. 94; 1870, p. 19, Appendix.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 1867, p. 654.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 1868, pp. 650-656.

in the Old School organization. Dr. S. C. Logan, their first secretary, resigned. One notes the kaleidoscopic rush of events: Dr. Stephen S. Mattoon begins his long and fruitful presidency at Biddle Institute. . . . Scotia Seminary, the first Presbyterian school for Negro girls, is organized by Luke Dorland. . . . The New School Presbytery of South Carolina is changed, probably because of another presbytery in the same state, to Fairfield Presbytery. . . . Mid-Macedonia Church in Georgia, under "Uncle Joe" Williams, one of the intrepid founders of Knox Presbytery, boasts of seven hundred members. . . . The president and professors at Biddle care for twenty-two churches. . . . *The Southern Evangelist*, a journal for Presbyterian Freedmen, makes its entry. . . . Names begin to appear: A. A. Jones, W. H. Franklin, R. P. Wyche, each to give more than fifty years of outstanding service. . . . It is now Biddle University instead of Institute. . . . John E. Rattley a tutor there. . . . J. P. Crawford and John Murray enter. . . . The Dillard brothers, George and Clarence, later to become such towers of strength, begin as catechists. . . . Death ends the labors of Secretary A. C. McClelland of the Freedmen's Board, with Richard H. Allen succeeding him. . . . Solomon Porter Hood, afterward a distinguished leader of the A. M. E. Zion Church, is ordained by the Presbytery of Chester (Pennsylvania). . . . The eloquent Joseph C. Price and W. H. Goler, both later presidents of Livingstone College, complete their work at Lincoln. . . . Dr. Samuel J. Fisher begins a long and distinguished career as an executive of the Freedmen's Board. . . . More names: M. J. Seabrook, and F. C. Potter. . . . J. A. Savage and H. C. Mabry and A. B. Fortune, later a noted elder, begin their varied tasks. . . . Lack of harmony noted between Lincoln University and the Freedmen's Board. . . . Dr. Dorland resigns after seventeen years at Scotia, is succeeded by D. J. Satterfield, and journeys to western North Carolina to erect another monument of service in Dorland Institute for white mountain youth. . . . Dr. E. E. Swift, long a leader of the Freedmen's Board, passes on, and is followed by one who was to become as noted, E. P. Cowan. . . . Fairfield Institute merges with Brainerd. . . . F. J. Grimke begins at Jacksonville . . . the long labors of Le Vere, the Tennessee pioneer, reach their close.

As might be expected, one finds that the years from 1870 to 1890 were marked by considerable experimentation. New methods were attempted and new features employed or adapted to the work. Students from Lincoln and Biddle were used extensively as summer teachers during the first part of this period. A distinctive feature throughout these years was the large use of licentiates and more especially that of catechists. Something as to the manner of use of these early catechists may be informing. The usual prac-

tice was to place a young aspirant to the ministry who was without sufficient training for licensure in charge of a church as a guide or helper, always under the supervision of an ordained minister. By this arrangement one minister might have responsibility for a number of churches, with a catechist for each church. Thus in 1874 President Mattoon and Professor Shedd of Biddle are reported to have had responsibility for ten churches between them, with a catechist for each church. In the early days when the number of churches far exceeded the available supply of regularly ordained ministers, this method was effective not alone in maintaining vigorous churches but also in training these early ministers.

Another helpful experiment of the early years was the practice of conducting presbyterial conventions at convenient centers. These conventions were in reality training schools for Presbyterian ministers, elders, and deacons and were signally effective in the development of an informed laity and in giving prestige to the Presbyterian enterprise. Still another venture of the period was the creation of the office of field secretary for the actual supervision of the work. The first to fill this position was a white minister, Henry N. Payne; his active energies and positive influence over a long period of years contributed largely to the development of the work.

It was a time of rapid expansion. Operations were early extended into Virginia, Kentucky, and Florida, and by the end of the period, in Arkansas; a school, Mary Allen, had been founded in Texas, and work started, which, however, does not seem to have lasted, at Baxter Springs, Kansas. (It is worthy of note that this work at Baxter Springs was planted as a result of the short-lived migration of Negroes to Kansas in 1879 under Benjamin "Pop" Singleton.) The greatest expansion of the time came among the Choctaw Indians and their former slaves in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). The first Negro presbytery west of the Mississippi River was established among them. But the old ground was by no means neglected. Churches and missionary schools sprang up plentifully, as well as important secondary schools. Albion Academy at Franklinton, Haines Institute (Lucy Laney) at Augusta, Swift at Rogersville, Ingleside in Virginia, and more than minor work at Beaufort and Abbeville in South Carolina all came within this bustling, busy period.

As early as 1876, one church, unfortunately unnamed, is credited with being self-supporting, while three years later, Atlantic Synod, still the only Negro synod, voluntarily reduced the amount asked of the Freedmen's Committee for support. The next year the same synod chose a missionary to further the work within its bounds. The number of churches, com-

municants, mission day schools, and pupils, and the contributions from the field showed substantial growth and enlargement. In 1888 the Board of Missions for Freedmen could boast, with a pride that was altogether understandable, that twenty new ministers, ten from Lincoln, six from Biddle, and four from other sources, had that year been commissioned and sent as missionaries into the field. And it was during this latter period that there came two events destined to provide a mighty impulse for the development of the work with freedmen: the organization in 1884 of the first Negro Synodical Women's Missionary Society and the appointment in 1887 of the first Sunday school missionaries for work among freedmen.

Of the Pioneers

By 1890, it was possible to see vast changes in the race brought about in the twenty-five years since emancipation and especially in that rather minute segment of freedmen that had been brought under the influence of the Presbyterian Church.

In 1865 the freedmen had no churches or schools; they had no educated ministers or teachers, especially in the Old School branch. Now a line of churches and schools, beginning in Virginia, extended down the Atlantic seaboard through the Carolinas and Georgia into Florida, and from Virginia westward over the mountains into Tennessee and Kentucky, across the mighty Mississippi into Arkansas, and on to the Indian Territory and Texas. And now by far the greater part of the work of these fields was carried on by Negroes who had been trained for their tasks in Presbyterian schools by Presbyterian men and women. Those who gave this service and who wrought the transformation were the pioneers: white men and women who came from the North as missionaries to the freedmen and whose coming brought light and life.

Dean Kelly Miller, himself a product of Willard Richardson's Fairfield Academy, pays the pioneers this tribute: "A worthier band never furnished theme or song for sage or bard. Their courage, their self-sacrificing devotion, sincerity of purpose, and purity of motive, and their unshaken faith in God, were their pass keys to the hearts of those for whom they came to labor." Mrs. L. H. Hammond, a southern white woman, says: "They brought with them the principle of life: love. They kindled light in darkened hearts; they sent out thousands of Negroes fired with ideals of service to their race."²⁰

But perhaps the most eloquent and meaningful of all tributes is revealed in the records of Presbyterian work among freedmen, a tribute of love and

²⁰Quoted by S. J. Fisher in *The Negro: An American Asset*, 1920, p. 95.

honor and of the ever-living gratitude of freedmen to their friends: old Logan Hall at Biddle; a Murkland and a Mattoon church; schools such as Swift, Haines, Mary Holmes, Boggs, Mary Allen, Coulter, Richard Allen, Larimer on Edisto Island, Fee; McClelland and Rendall Presbyteries, and Le Vere Presbytery for the Negro pioneer in Tennessee—all bear the names of champions of the cause of Negro education. Wherever one travels through the Negro Presbyterian harvest fields of the South, one finds such cherished memorials. It is but natural, though eminently fitting, that the names of those who gave money be signalized in bronze and stone, but even more numerous and conspicuous are the names of those who gave something that to the freedman was more precious and abiding. And so the freedmen have given to their choicest possessions, their churches and their schools, their sons and their daughters, the names of their friends.

3. Recognition

DAWN OF A NEW LEADERSHIP

1891-1922

IN 1891 Daniel Jackson Sanders was elected president of Biddle University. This action, the most momentous in the history of the work among freedmen, centered upon the greatest Negro character the Presbyterian Church has known.

Daniel Jackson Sanders was born a slave in South Carolina in 1847. Apprenticed at the age of nine to learn the shoemaker's trade, he soon became a skilled workman, learning to farm also. He learned to read when he was twelve years old by puzzling out the letters of the alphabet from a copy of Webster's *Blue Back Speller* and further developed his skill by poring over old newspapers and stray leaves from discarded records. One day, a blessed day it was for him and for the race, he came upon a copy of Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*. He read it and became inspired to seek a larger and fuller life. In February 1865 he went to Chester, South Carolina, starting from his home at midnight and walking the many miles between. Something of the Franklin manner is seen in his carrying with him a bundle of clothing, his kit of shoemaker's tools, and a supply of bread and cheese.

At Chester he came under the influence of Samuel Loomis, founder of Brainerd Institute, and the ministry became his high objective. He became a student at Brainerd and gave himself earnestly to Christian work. It is stated that five Presbyterian churches in the vicinity of Chester owe their beginnings to his labors. In 1871 he entered Western Theological Seminary, then at Allegheny, Pennsylvania, and completed the full three-year course, taking prizes in Hebrew. Upon his graduation in 1874 he went to Wilmington, North Carolina, where, as minister of the Chestnut Street Presbyterian Church, he spent the next sixteen years, covering so wide an orb of service that even before 1890 his gifts and influence had become widely recognized.

As early as 1876 Sanders had spent nine months in Scotland speaking for the Presbyterian Freedmen's Committee and had been instrumental in obtaining substantial funds for the work. At Wilmington he was the first superintendent of Negro schools, directed a mission school in connection with his church, and was influential in establishing other churches and schools in that section. He served as co-editor, with Professor J. H. Shedd of Biddle, of the first Presbyterian paper for freedmen. In 1877 this was merged with *The Africo-American Presbyterian*, and Sanders became editor and manager of this publication. He was very influential in the organization of the first women's society of the Synods of Atlantic and Catawba and had the unique privilege of serving at different times as stated clerk of both synods. Honors, too, had come: he was the first person to receive the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Biddle University and the first Negro to be elected to Biddle's board of trustees, while Lincoln University conferred upon him both the degree of Master of Arts and Doctor of Divinity. What a truly astounding series of achievements for a former slave, and all within the space of sixteen fleeting years!¹

In the light of so distinguished a record it might be expected that the selection of Dr. Sanders as president of Biddle University would have been attended by the most favorable and happy circumstances. Such, however, was not the case. When the Presbyterian Freedmen's Board decided upon a Negro for the presidency of the largest and most widely known institution under its care, it undertook another bold venture. All of the professors at Biddle had hitherto been white men except for one Negro professor, George E. Davis, who had been elected two or three years before. Now the Board proposed to have a faculty of eight professors, four white and four Negro. Upon learning of this plan, three of the white professors, "for reasons satisfactory to themselves," resigned.² Only the fourth, Dr. A. P. Bissell, professor of Hebrew, remained unperturbed and continued teaching there for ten years afterward.

It is reported that leading church papers declared that the election of a Negro to the position was untimely. Dr. William L. Metz, missionary in South Carolina, stated that the local newspapers roundly condemned the action, and that the southern white trustees of the school resigned. "Even the students," it is stated, "were skeptical."³ The Board, however, did not yield to adverse sentiment but remained faithful to its aims. Its position

¹E. P. Cowan in an article in *The Assembly Herald*, March, 1901, p. 116.

²*Minutes of the General Assembly*, 1892, p. 18, Appendix.

³*Johnson C. Smith University Bulletin*, Vol. I, No. 4, p. 15.

in the matter is well worth remembering with joy and gratitude. Three other Negro professors were elected and the plans went on.

It can readily be seen that the first Negro president of Biddle University faced a formidable task as he entered upon his duties in 1891. The eyes of Presbyterian church members, North and South, Negro and white, were upon him. Upon the success of his administration depended not only his own career and that of Biddle University but the whole policy of the Church with respect to Negro leadership. Moreover, in 1891 in the major educational institutions of Church and state no Negro leader was to be found. It was much later that Booker T. Washington was to electrify the nation with his Atlanta address, and Union, Shaw, Hampton, Lincoln, Fisk, Atlanta, and Tallega were under white leadership. Only the institutions of wholly Negro denominations, as Wilberforce and Livingstone, had Negro presidents.

Thus it is of vast historical significance, apart from other considerations, to find that the first Negro administration at Biddle University was an eminent success by any standard of judgment. Spurred by the challenge and the opportunity, Dr. Sanders and his associates labored at Biddle, ever lengthening cords, ever strengthening stakes. The United Presbyterian Church of Scotland provided a generous African Scholarship Fund; Carnegie agreed to give half of the entire cost of a library. The early adverse sentiment was soon transformed, near and far, to one of appreciation and warm encouragement.

Daniel Jackson Sanders, by his success at Biddle University, demonstrated convincingly the capability of the Negro as an administrator, and his success was a vital factor in Negro progress. It was a fitting appraisal of his worth and influence that, when he died in 1907, the Board of Missions for Freedmen declared: "We have sustained no greater loss in the death of any one man since the work began."

Upward Climb of the Work

As we travel through the years from 1890 toward the present day, it can readily be discovered that the patterns of policy and program had been in the main definitely established in earlier years. Variations there were, to be sure, and some of them important, but in the large the bases that had been set at the beginning of the work among freedmen, and which had become settled as early as 1870, were closely followed. The training of ministers and leaders of the race in a system of schools and churches was ever the chief emphasis. The use of catechists was purely a temporary

phase and had been made unnecessary by the more nearly adequate supply of trained and ordained ministers. Thus the work continued to be built and extended on the old foundations.

But a new impetus had been given the work among freedmen by the recognition of its leadership, and the decades that led over into the twentieth century were halcyon years. Scotia, still under the consecrated leadership of Dr. Satterfield, and Biddle were the apex of the educational work, though rapid advance was shown by other boarding schools. Mary Holmes and Barber Seminaries were started in Mississippi and Alabama. A group of larger mission schools came at Danville, Virginia; Danville, Kentucky; Madison, Georgia; and five places in South Carolina. McClelland and Billingsley Academies were established respectively at Newnan, Georgia, and Statesville, North Carolina, while schools that had been operated by outside enterprises at Blackville, South Carolina, and Camp Nelson, Kentucky, were taken over.

Dark financial times at the beginning of the new century retarded the work for a time, but in 1902 came expansion. The smaller schools were strengthened and the school terms in general extended. The same year found the number of Negro Presbyterian communicants in the South exceeding 20,000 for the first time. Birmingham Presbytery, the tenth among the freedmen, was organized with churches in Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi. This was the first Negro presbytery organized between the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Great River. Dr. H. N. Payne, former field secretary and president of Mary Holmes Seminary, was the first stated clerk of the new presbytery.

An event of some significance took place in 1890 when Dr. William H. Weaver was chosen by the Freedmen's Board to act as its financial agent for Biddle University. Dr. Weaver, a Negro minister, had served as pastor of the Madison Street Presbyterian Church in Baltimore for sixteen years before his appointment. Many people are under the impression that Dr. Weaver succeeded Dr. Payne as field secretary. It is true that he was appointed the year of Dr. Payne's retirement but he was definitely assigned to the work of visiting the Northern white churches in the effort to secure funds for Biddle University. Lantern slides were later made for him and were used in connection with these visits. Further, in 1900, while Dr. Weaver was still employed, Dr. J. P. E. Kumler was chosen as field secretary by the Freedmen's Board. While it may be true that Dr. Weaver was given authority to act in a supervisory capacity for a time, it must be said that the report of his serving as field secretary is without verification.

The Sunday School Missionaries

The impulse and energy engendered by the Sunday school missionaries have added immeasurably in numbers, strength, and influence to the work of the Presbyterian Church among freedmen. Starting in 1887 with two missionaries, the group increased to eight by 1900, and to twelve by 1908. They were true Christian crusaders, hardy, daring, tireless, abounding with zeal for the work of the Lord. Of but few we shall write.

George T. Dillard, great of voice and body, as great in mind and spirit, was the first to be chosen. His winning ministry rescued hundreds in the lowlands of South Carolina. He afterward became the first superintendent of Negro missionaries, serving many years.

L. P. Berry, known afar as "Colonel" Berry because of his meritorious service during the Spanish-American War, was one of the early graduates of Biddle under Mattoon. He forewent the prospect of a bright law career to engage in his Master's service and was probably the best known and loved of all the missionaries. He labored through North Carolina, Kentucky, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee, and it was reported in 1900 that nineteen churches had developed from mission Sunday schools organized by him in the space of seven years. He served continuously as a ruling elder for more than fifty years.

There were those like William H. Jackson, who labored memorably in North Carolina, and like the never-to-be-forgotten A. A. Adair, who died in the performance of duty. But the record would be far from complete without the name of Albert Byron McCoy. Himself saved through missionary endeavor, upon the completion of his education he entered earnestly into this service and for more than a quarter of a century rendered conspicuous service to the church and the race. He was the director of Negro Sunday school missions for more than fifteen years.

Publicity for Freedmen

Fortunate for the Church, doubly fortunate for the freedmen's cause, was the absorbing devotion with which the men and women chosen to administer the work among freedmen addressed themselves to their task. The Women's Department, organized in 1884 with Mrs. C. E. Coulter as general secretary, gave tremendous strength to the work. Churches and Sunday schools were kept aware of the needs, and gifts for specific objects were constantly sought. The activities of Miss Mary Holmes, Ph.D., of Illinois, were particularly outstanding. Serving without pay as secretary of the Northwest, for years Miss Holmes visited churches throughout the Middle West. Because of her rare devotion and unceasing endeavors, even

during her lifetime the Mary Holmes Seminary was named in her honor. In 1896 Dr. Payne had an exhibit of Presbyterian work at the Atlanta Exposition, while the General Assembly at Philadelphia in 1900 was the occasion of an elaborate portrayal of activities among the freedmen. During the long careers of E. P. Cowan and S. J. Fisher of the Freedmen's Board, publicity began to emerge in behalf of the Negro. Their eloquent voices were rarely silent. That able leader of Sunday school missions, Dr. James A. Worden, and his beloved successor, Dr. Alexander Henry, also spoke freely for the freedmen. The annual reports of Freedmen's work to the General Assembly, while perhaps holding unduly to a rather stereotyped groove, nevertheless had in them the note of sincerity and of earnest, urgent appeal.

In other church publications, however, articles were fresher, had greater variety, and were far more interesting. Pictures were often reproduced. In the *Assembly Herald* of 1904 two pictures gave a striking contrast: one showed a Negro woman nursing a white child; the other, a ragged Negro boy and his baby sister. Under the first picture the caption read, "Tenderly cared for"; under the second were the words, "Left pretty much to themselves." The *Assembly Herald* of 1905 presented very able articles by both Dr. Cowan and Dr. Fisher. In 1907 Dr. Fisher's notable book, *The Negro: an American Asset*, appeared. This was probably the first book on the American Negro to be written from the sympathetic background of the Presbyterian Church. Interesting and informing, it added much strength to the Negro cause wherever it was read.

Contributions from Negro Presbyterians too were occasionally found. Both W. H. Franklin and J. W. Holley had interesting articles in the *Assembly Herald* of June, 1908. Items of interest, notable achievements, bits of history, plans and changes of policies, all were sent out through the medium of Presbyterian papers to Presbyterian homes, with the earnest determination to make a way into Presbyterian hearts. And always, ever sounding, ever insistent was the appeal and the note of urgency; and always the iterations, "There is much land to be possessed" . . . "The fields are white and ready to harvest."

Benefactors

A study of the record of the contributions made by the Church through the years to the maintenance of its work among freedmen reveals that it has given, as Herman C. Weber put it, "very moderate support."⁴ And Dr. Weber very moderately describes it. The fact can well be stated here

⁴Herman C. Weber, *Statistics of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.*, p. 136.

that had the work among freedmen been dependent solely upon the current gifts of the Church for its enlargement, as well as for its maintenance, much of the advance and progress would never have been made. That development has come quite beyond the proportionate measure of the gifts of the Church is due to that mysterious yet blessed quality of Presbyterians (we found it before in Presbyterian solicitude for the slaves)—the warmth of personal interest that makes them, as individuals, rise far superior to the current levels of their Church.

There are examples like Matthew Scott of Ohio, who, though giving the first money for a building at Scotia Seminary, "was too modest to have his name attached to the school."⁵ Scotia was then named for his native land. There was Miss Laura Carter of Geneva, New York, for whom the capacious Carter Hall at Johnson C. Smith University was named. McGregor Hall at Haines was the gift of one person, as was the chapel at Scotia. Property was given by Miss Bertha L. Ahrens for Alice Lee Elliott Academy in Oklahoma; valuable land came to Johnson C. Smith from the daughters of Dr. Mattoon; and the daughter of Dr. Kumler gave a boys' dormitory to Brainerd Institute. A unique gift of this type came from a Negro and former slave, Andrew Ferguson. Ferguson, after slavery's end, being industrious and thrifty, had saved up several thousand dollars and, from a deep devotion to his Church and his race, gave of his savings to establish a modest Negro church in Louisville, Kentucky, which today bears his name.

At times groups have united in their gifts. The beautifully named Faith Hall at Barber-Scotia was the gift of the Home Missionary Society of Cincinnati, Ohio. Mary Holmes Seminary, it is reported, was the expression of gratitude of the people of the Middle West for the devotion of Miss Mary Holmes. It is interesting to find that southern communities shared in the work also: the citizens of Crockett, Texas, donated a part of the land for Mary Allen, while the citizens of West Point, Mississippi, did likewise for Mary Holmes Seminary; land for a church at Decatur, Georgia, was given by the white citizens of that town, and a school at Chattanooga, Tennessee, was greatly aided by local friends. In the earlier days, around 1870, gifts to the work were received from the Freedmen's Bureau, although most of these funds went elsewhere. The Slater Fund later aided Biddle and a few other schools.

The most generous benefactors through the early years were Samuel P. Harbison and Mrs. P. H. Barber, both of Pennsylvania. Mr. Harbison was largely interested in a single project, a school for boys in South

⁵*The Assembly Herald*, p. 782.

Carolina, now Harbison Junior College. Mrs. Barber's ardent interest and support were centered upon a school for girls in Alabama. In each case faith was sorely tried. The worst disaster the Freedmen's work knew came on March 17, 1910, when a boys' dormitory was destroyed by an incendiary fire in which three students perished. But the Harbison interest did not diminish; the school was moved to another section of the state, and an even better plant was provided by his substantial generosity. Twice Barber Seminary burned to the ground, and each time another and better building replaced it. Mrs. Barber had built all three commodious buildings on the same spot, in Anniston, Alabama, in sincere determination to establish a college for Negro girls.

The largest givers to Freedmen's work were Mrs. Johnson C. Smith of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and James B. Duke of Charlotte, North Carolina, whose combined gifts to Biddle University, beginning in 1922, amounted to more than \$2,000,000. The first gifts that made the school possible had come from Mrs. Mary D. Biddle of Philadelphia, who gave the money for the first building, and from Colonel William R. Myers of Charlotte, who gave the first land. Thus northern and southern benevolence were blended in the life of this great work.⁸

Industrial Education and Farm Home Projects

Mention was made earlier of important variations from the established pattern of Presbyterian Freedmen's work. One of these was an intermittent emphasis upon industrial education. As early as 1884 an industrial department was reported at Scotia, while the same year Brainerd boasted of both industrial and agricultural departments. By 1889 considerable emphasis was given it. The next year it was made a special feature, and in 1902, together with the story of such a building at Biddle, came the proud announcement that "industrial education is taught in all of our schools." But the tide soon began to ebb, and after 1910 little was heard of industrial education except at Harbison, where attempts appear to have continued for a time.

Another variation, the Farm Home Plan, had much more potential importance because of its large social and economic possibilities. The Board was to procure a large tract of land suitable for farming, divide it into smaller holdings, and sell these on convenient terms to industrious and ambitious Negro farmers. Three projects of this kind were attempted: at Anderson, South Carolina, in 1904; at Keysville, Georgia, in 1911; and the largest in 1920, when the Harbison estate purchased 2,402 acres (later

⁸*Johnson C. Smith University Bulletin*, Vol. I, No. 4, p. 23.

increased to 4,000 acres) in the vicinity of Harbison Institute at Irmo, South Carolina. Unfortunately no definite report as to the outcome of these projects is available.

Steps of Progress

We have noted that at the beginning of the century the Presbytery of Birmingham was organized. While this presbytery covered a wide area, including the western portion of Tennessee, the churches in the eastern section, in which considerable Presbyterian strength was gathered, were still united with white presbyteries. After the action of the Church in 1905, when constitutional sanction was given to a separation of presbyteries within the same geographic area, the relations between white and Negro members grew more and more distant, and it was made unmistakably clear that the Negro ministers and their churches were no longer welcome. Because of this condition, other Negro presbyteries were formed, and on October 25, 1907, the Synod of East Tennessee was formed, with 3 presbyteries, 35 churches, 28 ministers and 1,459 members. The synod covered all of Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi, and parts of North Carolina and Virginia. The first moderator, Dr. W. H. Franklin, made clear the reason for the action: "It was the carrying out of the color line which was demanded . . . no other alternative was left for the Colored churches and presbyteries."⁷

(The action of the Presbyterian Church in 1905, to which reference was made, is of such significance as to demand further attention. Beginning about 1900, or even before, the question of race relationships in presbyteries and synods gave rise to considerable discussion, especially in the southern part of the Church. The law of the Church then prohibited the existence of more than one presbytery or synod within the same territorial bounds; consequently all Presbyterian ministers and churches in the same territory were members of the same presbytery and synod without respect to race. There was a strong desire on the part of southern presbyteries for a change in this law, and agitation continued to increase until 1903 when the Assembly appointed a Special Committee on Territorial Limits of Presbyteries to study the whole matter and report to the next Assembly. Overtures that had previously been presented to the Assembly from the Synod of Tennessee and from the Presbyteries of Hannibal, Holston, Kansas City, Kingston, North Texas, St. Louis, and Union, were turned over to the committee. These overtures all urged that the rule be rescinded, but the Presbytery of Cimarron, in the then Indian Territory, proposed that a separate African (or Negro) Presbyterian Church be organized. The Special Committee, reporting in 1904, recommended an overture providing

⁷*The Assembly Herald*, 1908, p. 135.

that "in exceptional cases a Presbytery may be organized within the boundaries of existing Presbyteries, in the interests of ministers and churches speaking other than the English language, or of those of a particular race; but in no case without their consent; and the same rule shall apply to Synods."⁸ This overture was sent down to the presbyteries of the Church, and was by a sufficient number affirmed, so that, in 1905, it became the law of the Presbyterian Church.)

West of the "Father of Waters" the Rendall Presbytery was organized the same year, and shortly thereafter the last Negro synod, Canadian, came into existence. The list of Negro synods now was complete, and largely that of the presbyteries. The Canadian Synod covered Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas (but with only a few small churches in Texas then and now). In churches, ministers, and members, Canadian synod was the smallest of the four Negro synods.

The vigor with which the Sunday school missionaries explored and conquered new territory for the Church was strongly carried over into the Sunday school work of the organized churches. As a result of their zeal, synods, presbyteries, and churches, and Negro Presbyterians as a group began to be Sunday school conscious and commenced with enthusiasm and energy the development that has made the Negro Presbyterian Sunday school work the recognized leader among Negro church groups. The Sunday school conventions of district and presbytery that grew up during the first decade of the new century and that reached their full flowering in the great synodical conventions of Atlantic and Catawba were mighty and thrilling assemblages, which aroused immeasurable vitality and power for Presbyterian enterprise.

Nor should it be thought that the women were silent. Long before, the synodical groups of missionary societies had pledged \$1,500 to the work and had kept their pledge. Now, immediately upon the organization of each presbytery or synod, a women's society would speedily follow, ready to engage in helpful service. In 1911 another step was taken by the Freedmen's Board when James J. Wilson, an able and eloquent minister, was appointed by the Board as an evangelist. So greatly in demand and so productive of good were Dr. Wilson's labors that the Board appointed another evangelist, Dr. James M. Ewing, whose services were equally effective.

A Constant Emphasis

"The Bible and the Shorter Catechism"—one finds this phrase in reports, articles, and exhibits, almost everywhere, almost always. In all of

⁸*Minutes of the General Assembly*, 1904, pp. 141-147.

the schools for freedmen it was meticulously taught. Perhaps the only variation was found in Chattanooga: there the children sang it. An example may be interesting: one of the features of the commencement exercises of Biddle University in 1905 was a Shorter Catechism contest between the students of the College and those of the Theological Seminary. Truly, the living foundation stones of Presbyterian work among the freedmen have been "The Bible and the Shorter Catechism."

The Workers' Conference

In 1910 John M. Gaston entered the Presbyterian work among freedmen as associate secretary of the Board. Dr. Gaston, fresh from an important pastorate in Pittsburgh, became an active co-laborer with the valiant veterans, Dr. Cowan and Dr. Fisher, sharing their ardent devotion to the cause, a devotion and a service that in him the years but deepened and enlarged. Three years later at his call a small group of Negro ministers and lay workers from the field gathered at Mary Potter Academy in Oxford, North Carolina, to begin what has developed year by year into the annual Presbyterian Workers' Conference, probably the most important force in Negro Presbyterian work today. Hundreds gather for its sessions, and the problems of the work of the Church in the large and everyday procedures in community, church, and school are ably presented and thoroughly considered. Besides serving as a bond for the Negro forces scattered throughout the Southland, it helped increasingly in later years to bring the Negro work into a closer and mutually appreciative understanding with the other phases of Presbyterian activity.

Council in the North

The Afro-American Council (now the Presbyterian Council of the North and West) made up of Negro Presbyterian workers in the North, was organized during the same period. While built along the same general lines as the Workers' Conference, it deviated sharply in that it formulated and executed its entire program and activities. The number of its members and supporters, in proportion to the churches north and west, is probably not large, yet doubtless it serves very helpfully to unify its co-operating churches.

The Great Migration, 1914 —

Some day the epic of the exodus of the Negro from the country of his fathers will be written. It should be as dramatic as the story of the flight of the Israelites out of Egypt. Who shall sing the story of the flight from

Hattiesburgh, Mississippi? How the marvels of the North fired the imaginations of the black dwellers in alleys and on farms. How the flame of enthusiasm grew until it swept through the church meeting and carried the minister along with it, a black Moses to lead the way with his children. How the day was set for the disposal of possessions and what a pitiful price was received for beds and chairs and cherished household goods. How trains were boarded and crowded to suffocation. How, through all the discomfort, there burned the glorious hope of a great deliverance, of a land ahead overflowing with milk and honey. How, the Ohio river crossed, men and women got out, kissed the ground and returned to the train to sing of "Beulah Land." How, Chicago reached at last, the townfolk clung together, took possession of four blocks, opened their church again, and brought Mississippi en masse to Chicago's South Side. The Negro poet has yet to come who shall recite this song.⁹

The vivid picture by Mary White Ovington is an epic. As to the migration itself, space limitations prevent more than the bare presentation of the factual background and its direct connection with the extension of Negro Presbyterian work in the North and Middle West. The two tables that follow are revealing:

I. PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN NEGRO POPULATION

(Only those states showing increase of 25 per cent or more are shown.)

| State | 1910-20 | 1920-30 |
|---------------------|---------|---------|
| Connecticut | 38.7 | 39.5 |
| New York | 47.9 | 108.0 |
| New Jersey | 30.5 | 78.3 |
| Pennsylvania | 46.7 | 51.5 |
| Ohio | 67.1 | 66.1 |
| Indiana | 34.0 | 38.6 |
| Illinois | 67.1 | 80.5 |
| Michigan | 251.0 | 182.0 |
| Wisconsin | 79.3 | 106.5 |
| Missouri | 13.2 | 25.6 |
| Florida | 6.7 | 31.1 |
| West Virginia | 34.6 | 33.1 |
| California | 79.1 | 109.1 |

The table reveals that the heaviest rate of increase occurred in the middle Atlantic states, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania; and in the north central states, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and that the rise in the rate of California was particularly impressive.

⁹Mary White Ovington, *Portraits in Color*, pp. 142, 143.

II. CHURCHES ORGANIZED IN THE NORTH AND WEST, 1914-31

| <i>State</i> | <i>City or Town</i> | <i>Name of Church</i> |
|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| New York | Long Island | Bethel |
| | New York City | Rendall |
| | Rochester | Trinity |
| New Jersey | Newark | Hill Chapel |
| | Atlantic City | Jethro |
| | Asbury Park | Calvary |
| | Bloomfield | Trinity |
| Pennsylvania | Philadelphia | Reeve Memorial |
| | Pittsburgh | Bidwell Street |
| | Pittsburgh | Bethesda |
| Maryland | Baltimore | Knox |
| District of Columbia | Washington | Mt. Tabor |
| Michigan | Detroit | St. John's |
| Massachusetts | Roxbury | Gloucester Memorial |
| Ohio | Cleveland | St. Mark's |
| | Youngstown | St. Stephen's |
| | Toledo | Grace |
| Indiana | Indianapolis | St. Paul |
| | Gary | Grace |
| Missouri | Springfield | Gibson's Chapel |
| | Kansas City | St. Paul |
| Nebraska | Omaha | Hillside |
| West Virginia | Bluefield | Edwards Memorial |
| | Keystone | Whittico Memorial |

Of the twenty-four churches listed, twenty are found in states revealed by Table I as receiving the highest rate of increase in Negro population. Moreover, sixteen of these twenty churches are found in the two sections which show the highest rate: the middle Atlantic and the east north-central. Thus, it may be definitely seen that the increase in Presbyterian membership in the North was due, in a very large measure, to the migration.

Further, the influence of the migration is plainly seen in the large increase in membership of the Negro Presbyterian churches in the North which were in existence prior to 1914. The St. James Church of New York City alone recorded an increase of more than 1,200 members; the church in Newark gained almost 500, while established churches in Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago, and other cities all showed substantial gains. In 1914, twenty-four Negro Presbyterian Churches in the North had

a total membership of 2,958, while in 1931 the combined membership of these same churches had increased to 7,186.

Another positive factor in the growth and development of the northern work during this period was the appointment in 1917 of John W. Lee, a Negro minister of long experience in the northern work, as organizer in the North. Dr. Lee was greatly successful in his endeavors, gathering many congregations and organizing them into churches. In 1925 it was reported that he had organized twenty-five churches since his appointment in 1917.

Changes

Dr. E. P. Cowan, after thirty-five years of illustrious service, passes on. . . . Dr. J. M. Gaston assumes full charge as secretary of the Freedmen's Board. . . . Mrs. W. P. Larimer, Mrs. Agnes Bell Snively, Miss Roberta Barr, and Miss Maud A. Kinniburgh compose the staff of the Women's Department of the Board. . . . The year of 1923 comes, and with it the last report of the Board of Missions for Freedmen before the merger of its work with the new Board of National Missions.

The last report of the old Freedmen's Board well served to present the growth and extension of the work through the years. As to area, Presbyterian Freedmen's work was found in all of the south Atlantic states from Virginia southward; all of the east south-central states and in all of the west south-central states, with the sole exception of Louisiana. In all, twelve states commonly classified as southern had Presbyterian churches or schools. These states were:

| | | |
|----------------|-----------|-------------|
| Virginia | Florida | Mississippi |
| North Carolina | Kentucky | Arkansas |
| South Carolina | Tennessee | Oklahoma |
| Georgia | Alabama | Texas |

Moreover, in 1914 all of the Negro work in the other sections of the country was placed under the care of the Freedmen's Board, this action referring to the aided churches only. Even before the increase in numbers due to the migration had been fully felt there were Negro Presbyterian churches scattered through eleven northern and western synods. These synods, which indicate the distribution of the northern and western work, were:

| | | |
|--------------|----------|------------|
| New York | Maryland | Minnesota |
| New Jersey | Indiana | Colorado |
| Pennsylvania | Illinois | California |
| Ohio | Kansas | |

The report of 1915 indicated that there were thirty-five Negro Presbyterian churches in these synods at that time.

The work in the South was carried on in 4 synods and 16 presbyteries; there were 260 ministers, 460 churches and missions, with 26,964 communicants; 415 Sunday schools and 24,177 pupils; 137 day schools, 476 teachers, and 18,487 pupils.

There were 2 boarding schools for boys; 5 for girls, while 20 were co-educational; all of the rest of the schools were day schools.

Johnson C. Smith University had just begun to expand and was more than ever the capstone of the freedmen's educational work, while Scotia still led in schools for women.

4. *Participation*

ENLARGED HORIZONS

1923-1937

IN 1922, by authority of the General Assembly, steps were taken to consolidate the activities and the thirteen Boards and Agencies of the Presbyterian Church into four great Boards. The consummation of this work, the most far-reaching and important in the history of the Presbyterian Church, took place by the end of 1923, and in 1924 the new Boards, National Missions, Foreign Missions, Christian Education, and Pensions, submitted their first reports to the General Assembly. The new Board of National Missions combined seven of the former agencies, including the Board of Missions for Freedmen.

The question of uniting the Freedmen's work of the Church with the other Home Missions activities had come before the Assembly in 1870, 1874, and 1878, and again in 1888 and 1889. Through these years, and later, there were those who sought to gather all of the phases of Presbyterian Home Missions into one united enterprise, while there were others who as stoutly maintained that the various units of missionary service, and especially the Freedmen's work, should be kept and administered separately. One finds a suggestive analogy between these views and those of Hamilton and Jefferson with respect to the Federal Government. The action of the Assembly decided the matter, though it may not have silenced the discussion.

Under the Board of National Missions the Freedmen's work became the Division, later the Unit, of Work for Colored People, with Dr. J. M. Gaston continuing through these changes as secretary.

A glimpse at the work through the years immediately following shows: Dr. J. W. Lee still organizing churches in the North and Mid-West . . . the New Era Movement and the elevation of Dr. C. J. Baker from a successful pastorate in Birmingham, Alabama, to the field secretaryship for the four Negro synods, giving fresh energy and spirit . . . a magnificent

attempt to establish a college for Negro girls at Anniston, with the capable Miss Maud A. Kinniburgh, formerly of the staff of the Freedmen's Board, as the guiding spirit . . . W. H. Franklin and Calvin M. Young, able veteran educators, giving up their labors . . . J. D. Martin succeeding J. S. Marquis at Brainerd . . . youth beginning to march as A. H. George, F. C. Shirley, A. H. Prince, and T. B. Hargrave press to the fore . . . Lucy Laney sleeping in the place she loved and so greatly served . . . Savage and Dillard and Berry and Shaw—an illustrious company—finishing their course.

Two Important Conferences on Negro Work

The influence of two conferences held in 1931 is of such importance that the year might well be viewed as marking a new period in Presbyterian work among Negroes. These conferences were called, one in the North and the other in the South, by a committee of the Board of National Missions that had been requested by the General Council to make a study of its Negro work. The membership of each conference was composed of the Board's committee and a selected group of representatives of each field and sphere of service. The southern group had, in addition, Dr. Arthur D. Wright, president of the Jeanes and Slater Funds and executive of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and two representatives of these agencies.

Since Negro Presbyterian work in the northern states is related almost wholly to church activity, the northern conference confined itself to a consideration of churches and of ways to provide their development. The Southern conference, with its vastly enlarged scope, considered the entire program of the Church and the educational and Sunday school mission activities of the Board throughout the four Negro synods. Because of the extraordinary bearing of the conclusions of this conference upon subsequent procedure, a review of its actions will be helpful.

Negro Presbyterian Churches in 1931. When the membership figures of the southern churches and Sunday schools were presented, the disquieting fact was revealed that there had occurred, over a fifteen-year period, a net loss of 3,153 church members and a Sunday school loss of 3,112 members. Moreover, there were four fewer churches than in 1916. The following table shows figures for that period.

| | 1916 | 1931 | Net Loss |
|-------------------------------|--------|--------|----------|
| Number of Churches..... | 414 | 410 | 4 |
| Church Membership | 26,034 | 22,081 | 3,953 |
| Sunday School Membership..... | 22,972 | 19,860 | 3,112 |

Various factors were proposed as contributing causes: the migration from the South to the North, the shift from country to city within the South, the continuous shift in population from one rural section to another, and the absence of strong churches in all cities of the South. A standard church program was proposed, to be based on the following elements:

- 1. A service of worship and Sunday school every Sunday.
- 2. Some form of suitable community service.
- 3. Systematic pastoral visitation.
- 4. A vacation Bible school and weekday religious instruction.
- 5. The development of local financial support, including an every-member canvass and support of the benevolence budget.

Other recommendations were: a more effective re-grouping of the churches, the provision of manses so that a minister might live on his field, a minimum salary limit with the insistence that a minister devote his full time to his work.

Negro Presbyterian Schools in 1931. In the South, 103 boarding and day schools were reported as being supported by the Board of National Missions. The following table shows the distribution of these schools by state and type:

| | <i>Day Schools</i> | <i>Boarding Schools</i> |
|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Virginia | 12 | 1 |
| North Carolina | 9 | 5 |
| South Carolina | 34 | 6 |
| Georgia | 10 | 4 |
| Florida | 2 | 0 |
| Alabama | 2 | 1 |
| Mississippi | 0 | 1 |
| Arkansas | 1 | 4 |
| Oklahoma | 3 | 1 |
| Texas | 0 | 1 |
| Tennessee | 3 | 1 |
| Kentucky | 0 | 2 |
| Totals | 76 | 27 |

That the South had experienced a very great development in the public school system for Negroes was clearly revealed. It was estimated that

there were about 200 state-accredited high schools in the South for Negroes, North Carolina alone having 98. However, it was found that 25 per cent of the Negro population of the South lived in counties that did not have any Negro high schools. Better teachers and longer terms contributed to the marked progress made in elementary education. A comparison of church schools with public schools, with respect to educational standards, brought out the fact that in the general quality of their influence, the church schools led, but that in elementary school work the public schools were generally superior.

Dr. Wright, emphasizing the need for fewer and better schools, stated that "there are more Colored schools now than the available resources can adequately support." An important recommendation of the conference was that day schools be discontinued in all sections where state, city, or county had made provision for the elementary training of Negro children. Community service was proposed as a substitute program. Establishment of a standard college for Negro women was urged.

Presbyterian Sunday School Missions among Negroes. The general development of the South had lessened the need for as much pioneer extension as had occurred in previous years. While there was still religious destitution, there were not so many "lost communities" as before. It was stated that the increasing need of the time was to "emphasize the development of the Sunday schools attached to the churches."

Thus this conference served to provide a graphic picture of Negro work in the South as a whole, unrestricted by presbyterial or synodical boundaries or differences in types of service. It also adopted definite standards and objectives from experience and united judgment. Most of all, it gave opportunity, never before experienced, for Negro Presbyterians to participate in planning for the development of a mutual enterprise and prepared the way for fuller cooperation.

The year 1932 began the clearly foreshadowed reduction in the number of schools. During the year, more than 40 per cent of all the schools, or in actual number, forty-one, were either cut off or consolidated with others. In 1933, thirty-nine schools were closed. The result was that in two years 70 per cent of the schools that had been in operation in 1931 had been discontinued. While closing some of these schools was in harmony with the principles enunciated in 1931, there can be no doubt that the continued shrinkage of operating funds materially hastened the action. Left in operation was a total of fifteen boarding schools and eight day schools.

A National Missions Manual was issued in 1933, and as its standards of service were basically authoritative for all churches receiving aid from the

Board of National Missions, it was designed to bring the Negro work, ministers, and churches, to higher levels of efficiency. There were immediate and unmistakable indications of its quickening influence.

Other Developments

Schools of Methods. A mighty force swept through the Negro synods in the early 'Twenties in the form of schools of methods. Possessing much of the dash and fire of Sunday school conventions of former years, they were planned to provide fuller training in Sunday school and church methods as well as to quicken the life of the Church. They were usually held for a week in each Negro synod. Teachers were recruited mostly from local ministers and lay workers, while Sunday school missionaries were active in promotion and guidance. From these larger schools smaller units, or junior schools of methods, were later organized in many presbyteries. To Dr. J. M. Somerndike, then secretary of the Unit of Sunday School Missions, is due the distinction of originating these schools, and to his enthusiasm and support much of their success can be attributed.

One of the major emphases during this period was upon work for young people. In this too, Sunday school missionaries had an important place in organizing and developing a suitable program. Groups within presbyteries were transformed into young people's leagues, and schools of methods were transformed into young people's conferences. The influence of the Interboard Commission on National Missions and Christian Education was effective in bringing to these youth agencies the combined resources of both Boards.

Johnson C. Smith University. It is now time to tell of the significant advance made by this institution. On the death of Dr. D. J. Sanders in 1907, Henry Lawrence McCrorey was elected president of the then Biddle University. His life story is interesting. Born in South Carolina, he learned from his mother the catechism and a few hymns. He had the opportunity to attend school from the age of ten to sixteen years, but only for about one month in each year. Of his early efforts and struggles Dr. McCrorey wrote: "The first money I ever possessed was fifty cents which I spent for an arithmetic, and studied during the next six years, mostly at night, after a hard day's work, without a teacher, with a poor light and scarcely elbow room, for there were twelve of us around one fireside—father, mother, and ten children." Entering the preparatory department of Biddle University at twenty-three, he passed through to the college and seminary, and was graduated in 1895. He later attended the University of Chicago and studied Hebrew. Before graduation from Biddle he had served as an assistant

instructor, and in 1895 he began, first as a teacher, then as dean of the theological department, and finally as president of that institution, a career that extended beyond two score years of faithful, meritorious service.

Brief reference has been made to the generous gifts received by the institution, but the story merits fuller attention. Between 1921 and 1929 Mrs. Johnson C. Smith of Pittsburgh donated to the school a total of \$702,500 for endowment, buildings, and equipment. In recognition of her generosity the name of the school was changed in 1923 to Johnson C. Smith University. In 1924 James B. Duke, noted capitalist of Charlotte, gave the university an endowment estimated at \$1,300,000, then said to be probably the largest single gift ever made to a Negro institution. In a single decade these liberal gifts transformed a minor, desperately-struggling school into one of the foremost Negro colleges in America and afforded it membership in the highest educational councils and associations.

A step of historic moment was taken in 1932 when Barber-Scotia College was affiliated with Johnson C. Smith University. Barber-Scotia Junior College had been brought about earlier that year by the transfer of the college activities of Barber College for Women at Anniston, Alabama, to Scotia Seminary at Concord, North Carolina. A touch of special significance may be perceived in the erection of Barber-Scotia Junior College, even in the name. In it were preserved the precious traditions of "Old Scotia," known and revered among Negro women throughout the land, and those of Barber, that living memorial to Mrs. Phineas M. Barber, fearless, faithful, dauntless, devoted to her purpose of establishing a college for Negro girls. Dr. L. S. Cozart, splendidly trained and with wide educational experience, was given the post of dean.

Within a few years it was agreed that the best interests of the two colleges would be more effectively served by permitting each school to proceed separately. As a result, Johnson C. Smith became coeducational, while Barber-Scotia expanded its program and work to become a fully recognized and widely respected four-year college for women.

Lincoln University. While a consideration of Lincoln may appear beyond the scope of this study in that Lincoln is not sponsored officially by the Board of National Missions, the great weight of its influence since its beginning has been preponderantly Presbyterian. All of its presidents and until recently most of its teachers have been Presbyterians. Too, the theological school of Lincoln is under the direction of the General Assembly. We have traced the beginnings of Ashmun Institute, progenitor of Lincoln, from the compelling desire in the mind of its founder, John Miller Dickey, through the actual beginnings of its work to the point at which, after

the death of "the Great Emancipator," the school took the name of the martyred President. From 1865 until 1924, much of the growth and progress of Lincoln was entwined about one name, Rendall, for uncle and nephew guided its affairs for fifty-nine years.

The coming of Isaac Norton Rendall to the presidency of Lincoln in 1865 accomplished two fortunate things, immediate in their effect: John Miller Dickey was able to turn his energies exclusively to the task of obtaining funds for the maintenance of the work, while Dr. Rendall could devote his entire time to the scholastic side. Forty full years did the elder Rendall serve Lincoln, and upon his retirement in 1905, his nephew, whom he had trained for the task, took his place. John B. Rendall gave fifty-four years there, and teeming, telling years they were, nineteen of them spent as president. William Hallock Johnson, professor of Greek at Lincoln since 1903, followed Dr. Rendall in 1926. He retired in 1936 and was followed by the greatly beloved veteran professor of mathematics, Dr. Walter L. Wright.

During Dr. Johnson's ten-year term of service, Lincoln received nearly \$1,000,000 in gifts and legacies, half of which went for endowment and the remainder for current expenses and new buildings. Among these was a magnificent dormitory, at the time one of the finest in Negro colleges. It is interesting to discover the sources of these gifts: the General Education Board and the Rosenwald Fund, responsible for \$500,000 between them; the Delaware School Foundation; and the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The Presbyterian Board of Christian Education contributed an unnamed amount. The alumni of the school gave \$40,000.

In view of the fact that since its founding the president, professors, and trustees of Lincoln had always been white men, it is important to record that in these ten years, three Negroes were made trustees, while one was chosen as full professor. The movement toward an interracial trustee board and faculty was encouraged, with subsequent additions of larger numbers of Negro leaders. Various studies of this period indicate that Lincoln University has been a potent factor in the development of Negro leadership for many years, and that an unusual proportion of its graduates have attained distinction in the Church, and in education, medicine, and law.

Coulter Academy was one of the outstanding Negro Presbyterian schools of the period. Named for Mrs. C. E. Coulter, first secretary of the Women's Department of the Freedmen's Board, Coulter was founded and ably directed for more than twenty-five years by George W. Long. Located at Cheraw, South Carolina, it was coeducational and served a wide area in which there was a large Negro population, with a well adapted program

of community service, manual, agricultural, and domestic arts. In the classroom an unusually high type of scholarship was maintained.

There were other schools, some deeply rooted, which because they were a vital part of the Negro Presbyterian enterprise of this period, must be mentioned.

Mary Allen Junior College, located in Crockett, Texas, was said to dominate an exceptionally wide area. It was the first Negro Presbyterian institution to receive the Class-A rating of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and under Byrd R. Smith, its first Negro president, was one of the best organized and directed in Negro work.

Alice Lee Elliott Academy in Valliant, Oklahoma, had a long and impressive background of service, first to the Choctaw Indians and Negroes, and later to their sons and daughters.

Margaret Barber Seminary. An attempt was made to continue at Anniston, Alabama, this school's tradition of service to Negro women. However, after the transfer of the greater part of its assets to Barber-Scotia College in North Carolina, the venture became mainly a coeducational day school.

Some schools were combined. Thus the *Mary Potter-Redstone-Albion Academy* at Oxford, North Carolina, was the result of a merger of three schools in the same section of the state. At Burkeville, Virginia, Ingleside Seminary was joined with Fee Academy, formerly of Nicholasville, Kentucky, to form the *Ingleside-Fee Seminary*, a coeducational secondary school under the direction of Dr. H. W. McNair. Consolidation of schools in Arkansas resulted in the formation of *Arkadelphia-Cotton Plant Academy* at Cotton Plant, Arkansas, with Dr. L. W. Davis as head.

These schools, with the exception of the Mary Potter combination, have since either gone out of existence or passed into other hands.

Two other schools deserve special mention: *Haines Institute*, at Augusta, Georgia, and *Brainerd Institute*, at Chester, South Carolina. Haines, after the death of its founder, Miss Lucy Laney, found itself facing dire straits when the Board decreed it could no longer maintain the institution because of an acute shortage of funds. When it became officially known that the school would be forced to close, a group of Negro citizens of Augusta, headed by former Haines students, pledged themselves to exert every nerve to keep the school open. They agreed to assume a considerable share in the financial support of the school, and a request was made to the Board for permission to operate it. This the Board granted. A similar situation obtained at Brainerd, where with the same determination a small group of alumni and friendly citizens became active. They were able to interest

influential white citizens of Chester in their efforts, and a plan was developed by which the city and county assumed sufficient financial responsibility to continue the work. Both Haines and Brainerd have since become merged into the educational program of their communities, although in each the impact of the spiritual influence of their founders continues to be a blessing to their work.

The following institutions have continued under the operation of the Board of National Missions: *Barber-Scotia College*, Concord, North Carolina; *Harbison Junior College*, Irmo, South Carolina; *Swift Memorial Junior College*, Rogersville, Tennessee; *Mary Holmes Junior College*, West Point, Mississippi; *Gillespie-Selden Institute* and the *Gillespie Hospital*, Cordele, Georgia; *Boggs Academy*, Keysville, Georgia; and *Mary Potter Academy*, Oxford, North Carolina.

Let us now examine the remaining day schools as to type and work.

James Island School and *Larimer High School* were located near Charleston, South Carolina, on James and Edisto Islands, respectively. On these islands, cut off from the civilization of the mainland and separated from their island neighbors, existed a way of life that was almost a perfect example of retardation of progress resulting from isolation. In habits, customs, even in speech and language, the people of these islands are to this day at least a generation more backward than their mainland neighbors a few miles distant. The two schools represented a distinct type of service as essential, as imperative, as any within the realm of our missionary enterprise.

Dr. William L. Metz, who served as minister, teacher, example, and friend to the people of Edisto Island for twenty years or more, gives us something of the beginning of Presbyterian work there. Before the end of the Civil War, a Negro, Ishmael Moultrie, a former slave, unschooled, commenced to preach and to gather congregations on three islands: John's, James, and Edisto. How he became inclined to the Presbyterian Church is not known, but in 1866 (or 1867) Catawba Presbytery met in Charleston, and Ishmael Moultrie went before it and became the first Negro minister to be ordained by this body. The churches on the three islands were received by the presbytery and Moultrie was assigned to them as minister.

Goodwill School, another type of day school, was found in the Goodwill Community at Mayesville, South Carolina. This section, largely Negro, agricultural and somewhat remote from outside contacts, was predominantly Presbyterian, with a lineage extending back almost to the dawn of freedom. In a passage of letters between S. C. Logan, the first Freedmen's

secretary, and J. L. Wilson, secretary of Sustentation of the Southern Presbyterian Church, the latter complained on December 10, 1868, that "more than one hundred Colored members of the Salem or Brick Church had withdrawn their letters to form the Goodwill Church." For many years, this church had the largest membership of any Negro Presbyterian church in the South. In such a community, with educational advantages severely restricted, the day school has an important and continuing place.

The *Ebenezer Grade School* at Dalzell, in the same state and section, was of much the same type as the Goodwill School. A large church was there also. A unique feature of the field was a large and attractive recreational park as part of the church and parish enterprise.

The *Lincoln High School* at Due West, South Carolina, was still another type. No school building for Negroes was provided by the county, but the county and a Reformed Presbyterian college located there contributed toward the salaries of teachers and maintenance of buildings. A need and an opportunity, while temporary, were definitely found there.

The *McClelland* and *Selden Day Schools*, respectively at Newnan and Brunswick, Georgia, presented still different forms as to origin and basis of need. The first, as McClelland Academy, long rendered exceptional service to a community in which educational opportunities were severely limited. Selden, too, was formerly an academy, located on what was said to be one of the most attractive sites in the Negro field. When it was merged with Gillespie, a small school was left for a brief time, mainly for protection and conservation of the property.

All these day schools, with the exception of Goodwill, James Island, and Larimer, were discontinued as local facilities increased.

Advanced Types of Service

If one begins at the year 1935 and looks back upon the course of Negro Presbyterian work in the South for the preceding five years, one makes an interesting discovery. The work, instead of continuing its flow in the channels it had dug out and followed from generation to generation, appeared, as if from some hidden impulse, to ramify and to force branches and rivulets through barriers and out into new fields. Quite a number of these venturings occurred; some had vital bearing on the whole program of Negro work.

Larger Parish Experiments. The most significant of these were found in connection with work of which other phases have been presented. At Cheraw parish, made up of the Cheraw church and four outlying mis-

sions directed by Dr. George W. Long, a preaching service was held at each mission at least once a month, and during the same period all members of the various missions were brought in for a service at the central church. A member of the session supervised the work of each mission. With the help of theological students from Johnson C. Smith University an effective program of activities for young people was developed. The Goodwill parish was larger, with six missions radiating from a central church of 630 members, all under the ministry of Dr. W. J. Nelson. The same plan as that of the Cheraw field was followed, but the elders had more active responsibility for the missions, and the teachers in the day school directed activities for young people. Distinctive possibilities were noted in the parish at Keysville, Georgia, because of the presence there of Boggs Academy and a Farm Home Plan as well. Dr. J. L. Phelps did a notable work in founding the school and in organizing five missions.

Gillespie Hospital, one of the ventures revealing new areas of service, started as the Charles Helm Hospital. Though it had but five beds and one graduate nurse at the time, this unit of Gillespie-Selden Institute offered the only hospital facilities available to Negroes within a radius of 200 miles. Needless to say, its facilities were utilized to the fullest extent.

Bowling Green Home in Kentucky was another interesting experiment. Formerly a boarding school, it sought to provide a home for girls attending the public schools and to give them a Christian environment and opportunities for helpful service.

Community Centers and Community Work. There was a marked drift of the Negro population from rural communities to the large cities of the South. This tendency toward concentration by Negroes in the larger cities and towns, which still continues, gave rise not only to problems of church membership but to the more immediate problems of community adjustment and service.

In the light of these changed conditions, it cannot be denied that the cities and larger towns of the South made up the major battlefield for Christian conquest among Negroes. This situation was destined to continue for a long time. Certain activities, therefore, designed to cope with and in some measure to serve, in the name of the Church, some of the many needs of a complex Negro city life still have primary importance.

The community center came rapidly to the front as the outstanding medium for Presbyterian activity in cities. The oldest and farthest advanced in the South was the Newton Community Center at Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Newton Community Center, formerly a Presbyterian day school, anticipated by several years the diminishing need of such schools. It obtained the approval of the Board to attempt a program of activities more suited to immediate needs of its people and in 1932 undertook community work. From the beginning, the program was based on three main types of work:

1. A kindergarten and day nursery for children between two and five years old. In three years the average daily attendance in this division increased from thirty-five children to seventy-five. Special encouragement was offered to children whose parents worked away from home during the day.

2. Clinic. This proved to be one of the most helpful features of the Center. Newton provided the building and its facilities, the city furnished the medicines, Negro physicians and nurses gave their services without charge.

3. Community service. This covered a wide range of activities through the years: regular meetings of church groups; young people's activities and missionary societies; civic and political clubs; employment service for men and women; provision of food, clothing, and fuel for needy families; a working agreement with official social agencies for mutual cooperation; classes in many subjects from Bible to cooking and homemaking; neighborhood and community visitation.

While the Board provided the salaries of two workers and a small sum for maintenance, much of the support of the project came from local sources. Churches of all denominations and people of every race shared in it, and support came from other areas, too—Ohio, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, and especially from the Presbytery of Newton, in New Jersey, for which the school was named.

There were similar activities, on a more limited scale, in other sections of the South, during this period.

Enlarged Horizons

Some advantages altogether without precedent have come to the Negro work and to Negro Presbyterians since the formation of the Board of National Missions in 1923:

1. Membership on the National Staff. By the Form of Organization of the Board of National Missions all synods of the Church are entitled to representation on the National Staff, and also to certain field representatives.

2. Field Representatives of the Board. Previous mention has been made of the appointment of Dr. J. W. Lee to organize churches in the North. He served in that capacity until the formation of the new Board. In 1924, he was made a field representative, the first Negro to be so chosen.

3. The Advisory Committee on Negro Work. In 1932 a Committee on Negro Work was created by the Board of National Missions. The Committee was made up of Negro men and women from both North and South, and representatives of the Staff of the Board. The Committee has to do with the policies and programs of the Board with respect to Negro work.

4. Membership on the Boards of the Church. The first Negro to be chosen as a member of any Board was Joseph W. Holley, distinguished educator and churchman, who was elected by the General Assembly in 1932 to membership on the Board of National Missions. In 1933, Henry Lawrence McCrorey, president of Johnson C. Smith University, was elected a member of the Board of Christian Education.

When one considers the developments since the merger of the Boards, all taking place within so brief a time, they appear most clearly not as victories hard won but as evidences of comradeship and a pledge of faith. Whatever else the merger may have meant, it brought two results of deep and fundamental importance:

1. It served to "unpocket" the Negro. Before, his contact with his Church was definitely circumscribed. Of the thirteen Boards and Agencies, he knew but one; through one eyelet only could he glimpse the width and breadth and wonder of his Church. Now, through his various representatives, he could perceive infinitely more of his own work and of the vaster work of his Church throughout the land.

2. It enabled the Negro to participate in the larger work of the Church. Now he could share, through his representatives, in the planning of his own work as well as of the work of the Church as a whole. He could know of problems other than his own; he could seek, with others, better ways of loyalty and of service through the Church. In short, the Negro Presbyterian could face a wider area of his Church and of its manifold work than ever before.

5. Higher Ground

A NEW CHAPTER

1938-1952

THIS IS MORE than just another chapter. It tells of unprecedented events. It depicts the inauguration of another era. It reveals the emergence of a Church from a tradition-embedded, conventionalized pattern, to set forth upon hitherto untrodden ground. The title is well deserved. It *is* a new chapter.

The year 1938 was of historic significance in Presbyterian annals. In May, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., celebrated its 150th anniversary. It was fitting that Philadelphia was the site of this gathering, since the first General Assembly of the Church was convened in that city.

For the first time, the Assembly sponsored a Sunday afternoon program in the interests of better race relations. These services have been continued each year since that time.

This Assembly marked the retirement of John M. Gaston as secretary of the Unit of Work for Colored People. Dr. Gaston had come to the Board of Missions for Freedmen in 1910, and for nearly three decades he addressed himself to his appointed task with unswerving fidelity and devotion. Under his leadership many signal advances were brought to the Negro work throughout the Church.

To succeed Dr. Gaston, the General Assembly confirmed the appointment of Albert Byron McCoy.¹ This was the first time a Negro had ever been appointed to a top administrative position. Excepting only the deliverance of the Old School General Assembly of 1865, which brought into being the organized work among freedmen, this unprecedented action of the Sesquicentennial Assembly was unquestionably the most important the Presbyterian Church had taken with respect to its Negro work. It climaxed the total transformation of leadership that, within an astonishingly brief time, had been wrought in Presbyterian activities among Negroes. Where-

¹ *Minutes of the General Assembly*, 1938, p. 137.

as at the beginning of organized activity in 1865, supervision of Negro missionary work had been vested entirely in white executives, ministers, and teachers, now, by the elevation of Dr. McCoy, the direction of the work was placed, for better or worse, in the hands of Negro leaders themselves. Thus, another phase in the cycle had been reached; another round of the ladder—the highest yet—had been attained.

At this point it may be helpful to present a somewhat broader picture of the Negro people of America against the larger background of their national life. As a race they had traveled far in the brief years since their emancipation in 1863. Then, as we have pointed out, they had been “suddenly set free, after 250 years of slavery, without food, shelter, clothing, tools or land . . . and destined to live in a region impoverished by war and by the side of their conquered former masters.” They had come up “the rough side of the mountain” with amazing rapidity. But the upward climb from sheer, stark primitiveness had not been easy. The Negro poet, James Weldon Johnson, has vividly depicted this aspect of the rugged ascent in his “Negro National Anthem”:

“We have come over a road that with tears has been watered:

“We have come treading a path through the blood of the slaughtered.”

The Upward Climb

Many of the facts regarding the vigorous upsurge of the Negro people since their emancipation are too widely known to need elaboration here—the dramatic rise from almost total illiteracy; from complete poverty to ownership of homes and farms valued at many millions; the substantial growth and diversity of Negro business enterprises, notably in the insurance field; the significant contribution of the fraternal organizations; the entry of the Negro into the professions, medicine, law, science, education, and the great advances made therein; the development and utilization of corporate educational resources; the mighty influence of the Negro press.

And then there is the Negro Church. Dr. Harry V. Richardson does not overestimate its importance when he affirms that “the Negro Church is the greatest institution developed by Negroes on American soil.”²

In art, music, literature, and the theater the Negro has made a rich contribution to the cultural life of America, and these achievements have provided vast inspiration to the race. The exploits of Negro athletes like Jesse Owens, Joe Louis, and Jackie Robinson have brought a vicarious lift

²Harry V. Richardson, *Dark Glory*, Friendship Press, 1947, from Foreword. Used by permission.

and added immeasurably to the joy of life for many thousands of their less gifted brethren.

There have been strong personalities whose very names have become symbols of Negro struggle, and, in a considerable measure, of Negro achievement: Frederick Douglass, still the most heroic figure the race has produced; Paul Laurence Dunbar, whose songs raised the hearts of his own people and at the same time revealed their yearnings to the world; Booker T. Washington, who, providentially in time and place, transplanted an ideal into Tuskegee; George Washington Carver, poet, painter, man of science, man of God; W. E. Burghardt DuBois, the race's finest scholar; the incomparable and indomitable Mary McLeod Bethune; and Ralph J. Bunche, for whom destiny seems to hold so much in store.

But more and greater by far in importance than any other person or factor, the mightiest influence in the life of the Negro in America up to the present time has been the Negro preacher.

While there may be justifiable disagreement with Dr. DuBois' theory that the extraordinary influence of the Negro Church and its ministry is directly traceable to their African background, it cannot be denied that the Negro minister "early became an important figure on the plantation, and found his function as the interpreter of the supernatural, the comforter of the sorrowing, and as one who expressed, rudely, but picturesquely, the longing and disappointment and resentment of the stolen people."³ Dr. DuBois affirms also that after emancipation, the Church, under the leadership of the Christian (Negro) pastor, became "the center of Negro social life."⁴

Carter G. Woodson, a pioneer Negro historian, although referring to another generation, points out that "the Negro preacher . . . is granted more freedom of speech and permitted to exercise more influence than any other Negro in his community."⁵

Further, in addition to the spiritual leadership of the Negro minister, he states: "To the Negro community, the preacher is this, and besides, the walking encyclopedia, the counselor of the unwise, the friend of the unfortunate, the social welfare organizer, and the interpreter of the signs of the times. No man is properly introduced to the Negro community unless he comes through the minister, and no movement can expect success there unless it has his cooperation or endorsement."⁶

³W. E. B. DuBois, *The Negro Church*, Atlanta University Press, 1898, p. 5. Used by permission.

⁴*Ibid.*,

⁵Carter G. Woodson, *The Negro Church*, pp. 279-281.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 281.

In our own day, a decided transformation in the character of Negro leadership is observable. Where once, for a long period, even into the present century, the privilege of speaking and acting for Negroes as a whole was conceded to one or two persons, there is an increasing disposition to disperse the privilege of representation more widely. E. Franklin Frazier, in his scholarly study, *The Negro in the United States*, presents the matter convincingly:

The mass migrations of Negroes to Northern cities changed the character of Negro leadership. With the increasing occupational differentiation of the Negro population, the acquisition of political power, the increasing literacy of Negroes and the resulting differentiation of economic and cultural interests, a functional leadership appeared among Negroes. Since these changes have been associated with the increasing integration of the Negro into American life, the emergence of functional leaders is likely to become a permanent characteristic of Negro leadership as the participation of Negroes in American culture increases.⁷

The Stony Way

A view of the American Negro against the background of his place in the national life is incomplete without reference to those formidable unfriendly forces with which he has been compelled to contend from his emancipation to the present hour.

Ignorance and poverty were his bitter birthright; a slave experience of many generations was his chief inheritance. Emancipation, at first so glowing and hopeful, swiftly degenerated, after the seductive mockery of the brief "reconstruction years," into something incomparably disillusioning and insensately destructive. It would have been easy, terribly easy—it must have seemed simple, tremendously simple—to give up hoping or trying, to give up everything in those harrowing years.

Frank Tannenbaum, as quoted in *Negro Year Book*, 1947, states: "The emancipation may have legally freed the Negro, but it failed morally to free the white man, and by that fact denied to the Negro that moral status requisite for effective legal freedom."⁸

In the same book, Professor Harry A. Overstreet offers this significant comment: "To speak of the 'Negro Problem' is to assume that it is the colored man who has created and still creates some profound difficulty for the whites, when as a matter of fact, it is the whites who, by their original enslavement and continuing maltreatment of the Negro, have created

⁷E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro in the United States*, The Macmillan Company, copyright 1949, p. 563. Used by permission.

⁸*Negro Year Book*, 1947, p. 198. Used by permission.

and kept on creating profound difficulties for Negroes and themselves."⁹

And Gunnar Myrdal, the distinguished Swedish social scientist, whose comprehensive studies on American life are recognized as authoritative, says:

The "American Dilemma". . . is the ever-raging conflict between, on the one hand, the valuations preserved on the general plane which we call the "American Creed," where the American thinks, talks, and acts under the influence of high national and Christian precepts, and, on the other hand, the valuations on specific planes of individual and group living, where personal and local interests; economic, social, and sexual jealousies; considerations of community prestige and conformity; group prejudice against particular persons or types of people; and all sorts of miscellaneous wants, impulses, and habits dominate his outlook.¹⁰

A last word at this point might well be given to consideration of the effect of his slave experience, and the relentless opposition he has continued to face during the near-century since emancipation, upon the Negro himself. The Negro has not sought to establish a historical record for himself, either as a martyr or a superman. His utter being has been absorbed in a fierce struggle for existence, literally and with sternest realism. And the conflict has left deep wounds and scars.

Unquestionably the ablest treatment of the effects of these adverse pressures upon the Negro is found in *The Mark of Oppression*, a psychosocial study of the American Negro by Abram Kardiner and Lionel Ovesey of Columbia University, in which it is stated:

What is needed by the Negro is not education, but re-integration. It is the white man who requires the education. There is only one way that the products of oppression can be dissolved, and that is to stop the oppression.¹¹

A New Chapter Unfolds

"History repeats itself." This is an ancient proverb the verity of which has been well attested by time. But time quite as inevitably brings change.

It is not at all difficult to discover a clear parallel between the circumstances accompanying the elevation of Albert B. McCoy to his place of responsibility in 1938 and those of his pioneer racial predecessors. In his case, as with John Chavis, John Gloucester, and Daniel J. Sanders, it was necessary to overcome certain reservations and questionings and to provide

⁹Ibid., p. 199.

¹⁰Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, Harper and Brothers, 1942, Introduction, p. xlvii. Used by permission.

¹¹Kardiner and Ovesey, *The Mark of Oppression*, W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1951, p. 387. Used by permission.

full evidence of competence and compatibility to all concerned, not the least of them being members of his own race. As always, there were skeptics, but here again, as always, there were others at Presbyterian headquarters, in the Negro field, and throughout the Church who vouchsafed warm allegiance and unstinted support to the cause and to the man who had been chosen to direct its work.

Dr. McCoy received from the retiring secretary, Dr. John M. Gaston, an abundant measure of goodwill and cooperation that continued unabated through the thirteen years of his term.

During Dr. Gaston's long years of service and until his retirement, all Negro Presbyterian activities supported by the Board of National Missions with the sole exception of the Negro Sunday school missionaries were joined to the Unit of Work for Colored People, as the agency was then known. This included the Negro work in the North and West and the Negro schools. Upon his retirement several important changes took place. First, the Negro schools and colleges above the day-school level were transferred to the Unit of Educational and Medical Work. This was followed by the placing of the aided Negro churches of the North and West directly under the responsibility of their respective presbyteries. Sometime later, Dr. G. Lake Imes, minister and educator, who served for many years at Tuskegee Institute, was appointed field representative of Negro churches in the North and West under the Interboard Commission on National Missions and Christian Education. His office was related to the Department of City and Industrial Work.

From the foregoing paragraph it can be seen that this transition period brought about a considerable reduction in the area of activity for which the Unit of Work for Colored People was responsible. Moreover, it is undeniable that there was an appreciable loss of prestige, and assuredly of budget, in the process. But it should not be overlooked that there were gains that more than compensated for the losses. This is especially true of the schools and colleges. By their transfer to the agency established for all National Missions educational institutions, they were given undergirding, guidance, and association far greater than they had formerly received.

As for the Negro work in the North and West, it must be conceded that relating the aid of these churches to the presbyteries in which they are located has served to dramatize realistically the responsibility of these judicatories for the cultivation of all the fields within their bounds.

Thus the area of responsibility of the Unit of Work for Colored People became in the main the administration of the aided fields of the Synods of Atlantic, Blue Ridge, Canadian, and Catawba, commonly termed "the

four Negro synods." There were also a few day schools. In addition there was understandably a continuing relationship with the Unit of Sunday School Missions, under which Dr. McCoy had spent more than thirty years. That this total area of responsibility was not small may be seen from the following table:

NEGRO FIELD IN 1938 BY SYNODS

| Synods | Number Churches | Church Members | S. S. Members | Current Receipts | Church Benevolence |
|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Atlantic | 125 | 9,130 | 6,263 | \$40,167 | \$3,278 |
| Blue Ridge .. | 40 | 2,100 | 1,715 | 14,140 | 1,325 |
| Canadian | 45 | 1,270 | 1,367 | 9,229 | 1,061 |
| Catawba | 175 | 11,921 | 10,053 | 74,446 | 5,585 |
| Totals | 385 | 24,421 | 19,398 | \$137,982 | \$11,249 |

The new executive at once set about to gather workers for his staff and in due time was able to announce the following group: the Rev. A. H. Prince, field representative, Atlantic and Catawba Synods; the Rev. T. B. Hargrave, field representative, Blue Ridge and Canadian Synods; Dr. L. B. West, director of evangelism; Dr. Frank C. Shirley, managing editor, *The New Advance*. In addition J. T. Jones, supervisor of Sunday school missions, and Mrs. C. M. (Jamison) Mercer, supervisor of parishes, although officially serving with the Unit of Sunday School Missions, were accounted members of the group.

The New Advance, a semi-monthly Presbyterian periodical, made its first appearance on October 15, 1939. Begun under the vigorous leadership of Dr. Shirley, it grew steadily in influence in the Negro field and through the Church. After serving two years, Dr. Shirley relinquished the editorship of the paper because of other increased responsibilities, but resumed after four years and directed the publication until its end in 1950. Despite the brevity of its existence, it cannot be doubted that *The New Advance* made a major contribution to the development of Negro Presbyterian work during the period.

With the announcement of a new program and the selection of a field staff, the work began to move under its new leadership. There was much for leader and follower to learn of each other; of the work; of ways to serve together effectively with mutual respect and comradeship in the new relationship into which they had entered. Let no one assume that this was a simple, ordinary task, either for leader or follower; but the work went on.

Seventy-fifth Anniversary

The year 1940 marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of Presbyterian organized work with the Negro people of America. The historic event was given appropriate recognition during the year, but the earliest and one of the most significant observances came in the form of a Seventy-fifth Anniversary Edition of *The New Advance*. Because of the value of its contents and the representative relationship of its contributors the anniversary number is of itself a worthy contribution to the record that it commemorates.

The front cover presented a prayer of thanksgiving by former Dean Charles H. Shute of the School of Theology, Johnson C. Smith University. Greetings were extended by Dr. William Barrow Pugh, then Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Dr. E. Graham Wilson, then general secretary of the Board of National Missions, and by Dr. Hermann N. Morse, then administrative secretary of the same Board. Miss Virginia Ray, at the time assistant secretary with responsibility for Negro schools, contributed a statement about them. All other contributors were Negro Presbyterians representing the finest qualities of devotion and service: Dr. A. S. Clark, minister-educator; Mrs. M. M. Jones, pioneer churchwoman; Dr. W. L. Metz of Edisto Island; Mrs. C. M. Mercer; Dr. L. S. Cozart of Barber-Scotia; Mrs. Mae F. Barber, the field's first woman missionary; Miss Roosevelt Lee, Alabama parish worker; Dr. Shirley. Their stories, vividly describing the various ministries in which they and their colleagues were engaged, provided a revealing cross-section of notable achievement.

Dr. McCoy, as secretary of the work, presented the leading article, "The Outlook for Negro Presbyterians." In it he pointed out the progress made over the years in the churches and schools, and with the young people's organizations, and paid special tribute to the effective labors of the women's missionary organizations. His message carried a stirring challenge to continue forward.

Awareness of the significance of the anniversary was expressed editorially in the following words:

Both the Church and the Negro have ample occasion for gratitude at the fruitage of the years. Both have abundantly given; both have even more abundantly received. Constantly and steadily the Church has quickened and enriched the spiritual life of the Negro, again and yet again the Negro has enlarged and vitalized for the Church concepts of justice and brotherhood, oneness and service.

Because of the Presbyterian Church the Negro in America today is infinitely the richer in body, mind and spirit; because of the Negro, the

Presbyterian Church is immeasurably more responsive to human needs, more brotherly and more Christian.

By the grace of God, each, strengthening the other, has itself been strengthened; each, transforming, has become radiant. May the future years be as richly fraught with blessings!¹²

Official acknowledgment of its seventy-five years of service among Negroes was given by the General Assembly in 1940 and the anniversary was commemorated in various ways during the year. The most notable recognition came when in October the Board of National Missions met at Barber-Scotia College in Concord, North Carolina. This was the first time in all the seventy-five years of Negro work that the Board had met in the Negro field. It was a gracious tribute. That the Negro was not ungrateful was amply demonstrated when during one of the sessions an offering of \$5,000 was presented to the Board for its work. This gift was made up of contributions from Negro Presbyterians throughout the Church. It was fitting that the presentation was made by two representatives of the Negro field, Dr. Samuel A. Downer, of Knoxville, Tennessee, and Dr. George W. Long, of Cheraw, South Carolina.

In summary, it can be said that 1940 was a pivotal year with respect to Negro Presbyterian work. The seventy-fifth anniversary and its attendant activities vividly signalized the cumulative achievements of its Negro constituency to the Church at large. Even more, it provided a convincing demonstration of the competence and effectiveness of Negro leadership, and of its readiness to participate constructively at a higher level of cooperative church enterprise.

An Eventful Decade

It now remains for us to record the developments of the 1940-1950 period in Negro Presbyterian work. We may well point out, first of all, that at no time since the period of which 1865 was the swirling vortex have events moved so rapidly with respect to the American Negro. Although it reaches back across a longer time span, the 39th annual report of the National Urban League, published in 1950, vividly sketches the striking change:

Forty years ago the Negro was, in the main, rural-based, untrained and exposed to the terrific social hazards of the low-income group and the politically-ignored. The group's employment was almost wholly in farm labor, unskilled laboring jobs and domestic and personal service.

¹²*The New Advance*, March 15, 1940, p. 2.

Today, after four decades—only a briefly flashing moment as history is measured—15 million Negro Americans have shifted from rural homes to such an extent as to become a three-fifths urban population group. A fourth of their labor force is employed in industry and commerce, with a proud record of certified satisfactory performance in semi-skilled, skilled and technical jobs. The heavy imbalance between southern and northern residence is steadily being adjusted.

Even the current bitter controversy in Washington over the question of the Administration's civil rights proposals serves to emphasize the fact that discussion of the Negro's status and opportunity is being conducted each decade on higher and higher levels. Controversy may not diminish, but gains are being recorded in the midst of it.

This is the miracle, the stirring of the American public conscience under the stimulus of two World Wars and a catastrophic world depression—the emerging into social maturity of a racial group which historically has been restricted, shunted aside and debarred in its quest for an equal share in American Democracy.¹³

The significance of the Urban League report for us at this point is that by far the greatest part of this transformation has taken place within the past decade.

There are other areas, in addition to those mentioned in the above report, in which changes quite as remarkable have come. In Negro education, especially, marked progress has come as the result of favorable court decisions. In the South, where the need has been profound, tax-supported Negro schools at all levels have been substantially improved. State-supported colleges and universities hitherto closed to Negroes have opened their doors in a number of instances.

Private colleges are increasingly doing the same, and besides more than a score of Negro teachers are serving in white colleges and universities. A notable example is seen in the election of Dr. Ralph J. Bunche to a professorship at Harvard University.

Court action, which weakened the strangle-hold of "restrictive covenants," and Federal requirements checking the discriminatory use of Government funds in public housing have resulted in the increase of housing facilities for Negroes.

In sports, the theater, medicine, the law, and other fields, major and minor miracles of change were taking place. But let it not be fancied that these things were happening just of themselves, or without incident. Or that all efforts made for Negro advancement were successful. The sheer

¹³Excerpt from "A Social Miracle," *39th Annual Report*, National Urban League, March 31, 1950, p. 4. Used by permission.

fact is that each victory came after a grim, arduous contest. And there were defeats also . . . and "heartbreak hills" along the stony way.

The Church—all branches—did not escape the weight of this atmosphere of struggle and change. The Presbyterian Church was no exception. The Negro Presbyterian was keenly sensitive to its pressure. We can well be aware of these factors as we view some of the activities of the decade.

Negro Presbyterians were responsive to the varied demands of the war years. Many of their churches displayed their clusters of service stars, some of which were changed to gold as the war went on. About thirty ministers from the Negro field were enlisted as chaplains, one becoming the first of his race to serve as a Navy chaplain. Others served as civilian preachers in Army camps throughout the country.

There was considerable participation in various Presbyterian hospitality centers, as well as in the non-sectarian service centers.

The Presbyterian Wartime Service Fund received generous support, both financially and in activity. The two smaller synods, Blue Ridge and Canadian, ranked high in the list of per capita giving. Community centers, designed to serve defense workers and their families, were established in Portsmouth, Virginia, Wilmington, North Carolina, Brunswick, Georgia, and several other points of need. The Portsmouth project, organized by Dr. Thomas B. Hargrave, continues under his guidance to render a very effective service.

Negro Presbyterian work in the South, like that throughout the Church, met the urgencies of the war years and accepted with the Church the manifold challenge of the period that followed. Under the inspirational guidance of Dr. McCoy, a movement was begun to strengthen the structure and program—the rebuilding and renovating of churches; the erection of manses; larger contributions for self-support and benevolences; the increase of ministers' salaries; opportunities for the further training of ministers and lay workers; activities for young people. The success of these efforts was reflected in marked progress throughout the field.

New features, developments, changes, were a part of the period: under the versatile guidance of Thomas B. Jones, Harbison in South Carolina became a junior college, as did Mary Holmes in Mississippi; Mary Allen in Texas, Margaret Barber in Alabama, and Ingleside-Fee in Virginia, schools of such remarkable usefulness for many years, ceased to be; Coulter in South Carolina, served so capably by George Waldo Long until his death, passed into other hands. Robert E. Lee, Harold N. Stinson, and L. S. Brown, competent and consecrated leaders, became executives respectively of Swift, Boggs, and Gillespie-Selden.

At Johnson C. Smith University, Hardy Liston, with top-level educational experience, was inducted as president, succeeding Henry Lawrence McCorey, while Dean Charles H. Shute of the Smith Seminary was succeeded by Arthur H. George; the beloved veteran, Walter L. Wright, president of Lincoln University, was, in turn, followed by the talented Horace Mann Bond, first Negro president.

There were many changes: Sudor Q. Mitchell went from Seventh Street, Charlotte, to the historic First African Church of Philadelphia, later becoming the first Negro member of The Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions; William Lloyd Imes, pastor of New York's St. James Church, assumed presidency of Knoxville College in Tennessee; Frank T. Wilson left Lincoln University to become dean of the School of Religion of Howard University. Dr. Mitchell was succeeded at Seventh Street by James W. Smith, Sr., who had served in Knoxville and Raleigh; Shelby Rooks went to St. James, New York, while James B. Macrae, formerly of Fayetteville Teachers College, followed Dr. Wilson.

In the field staff, Frank C. Shirley became field representative of Catawba Synod, while Abraham H. Prince served in the same capacity in Atlantic Synod and later became director of evangelism for the southern Negro field when Lionel B. West returned to the pastorate at the Brooklyn Church in Charlotte. Toward the end of the period, Charles W. Talley and Herbert R. Pinkney became field representatives, the one of Atlantic Synod, the other of Blue Ridge and Canadian.

There were "firsts": Robert C. Newbold was the first Negro seminary interne; James W. Smith, Jr., the first traveling Fellow of the Presbyterian Board of Christian Education; Albert B. McCoy was the first Negro chairman of the National Staff; Darius L. Swann became the first Negro Presbyterian missionary to China. A sizable sprinkling of Moderators appeared—"firsts" again—in predominantly white judicatories—Hampton B. Hawes of the Synod of California; Halley B. Taylor, Synod of Baltimore; John T. Colbert, Baltimore Presbytery; Charles S. Freeman, Presbytery of Jersey City; Jesse B. Barber, Chester Presbytery; Augustus E. Bennett, Presbytery of Chicago; Arthur L. Polk, Presbytery of Parkersburg; and George F. Ellison became Vice-Moderator of the Presbytery of Philadelphia.

And individual achievements: William S. Mercer became first Negro Presbyterian to win a Master of Arts degree in church social work from the College of Christian Education, Chicago, now merged with McCormick Seminary; Columbia awarded John H. Ward the Master's degree; while to Robert E. Thompkins and Charles E. Boulware came doctorates from the University of Pittsburgh and New York University, respectively.

The College of Christian Education bestowed the first graduate degree upon a number of upstanding young men and women.

And new ventures: "The Lord's Acre Plan," inaugurated by Dr. Shirley in the Negro field, was put into successful operation at several points in Catawba Synod; Westminster Foundation centers were established at colleges in Orangeburg, South Carolina, and Durham, North Carolina; and Thomas A. Jenkins, with a fine record as an Army chaplain, served for a time as advisor to returned veterans, under the Office of the General Assembly.

And honorable retirement, choicest accolade of the Church to its living veterans, was accorded to Henry L. Peterson, Tennessee; Augustus S. Clark, Georgia; McLain C. Spann, Pennsylvania; Joseph R. Pearson, South Carolina; and Vanhorn Murray of Mississippi.

And transitions: Byrd R. Smith, of Mary Allen; George W. Long of Coulter; Sudor Q. Mitchell; William L. Metz ("Uncle Billie") of Edisto Island; Henry Ward Beecher Campbell of Washington, D. C.; George H. Hymes of Lincoln University. At the last meeting of the Workers' Conference, three distinguished ministers and educators were present and were given an ovation when it was disclosed that each had given more than a half-century of Christian service. Their names: Henry Lawrence McCrorey, Charles H. Shute, and Charles E. Tucker. All these have gone Home.

The Present Day

There are approximately 40,000 Negro communicant members within the fold of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., today. Organized Negro Presbyterian churches can be found in at least thirty states. This constitutes the largest racial minority group, with the greatest geographical spread, within the bounds of the Presbyterian Church. Probably ten or twelve thousand of this number are gathered in congregations in the Northeast and the Middle West, with three or four outposts on the Pacific Coast. There are about thirty-five Negro Presbyterian churches in the regions just described. These congregations, with one or two exceptions, are racially separate units and are connected with the presbyteries and synods in which they are located. Most of these churches are found in cities, and it is interesting to note their high concentration in eastern metropolitan centers. For example, there are twelve Negro Presbyterian churches in the lower New York-upper New Jersey areas; the Philadelphia district has seven; Baltimore, four; and Washington City, three.

Some of these churches are quite important. St. James, New York City,

Dr. Shelby Rooks, minister, with its roster of 2,500 members, is without regard to race one of the largest churches of the denomination, while the Siloam Church in Brooklyn is rapidly moving to new heights under its highly competent leader, Milton A. Galamison. Other significant congregations are the well known Dr. James H. Robinson's Church of the Master, also in New York City; Grace Church, Baltimore, where 150 Negro school teachers are part of the vast congregation served by Dr. John T. Colbert; and the influential Fifteenth Street Church of Washington, whose pastor, Dr. Halley B. Taylor, enjoys the unique distinction of having been the first Negro minister to serve as Moderator of the Synod of Baltimore. There are important Negro Presbyterian churches in Philadelphia, Newark, Cleveland, Jersey City, and St. Louis, and notable ones in Chicago, Detroit, and Los Angeles. All of the older Negro Presbyterian churches of the North and West are of stock and lineage of John Gloucester's First African Church of Philadelphia.

But despite the significance of these fields, the work of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., among Negroes is predominantly and pre-eminently in the South. More than two-thirds of the entire Negro Presbyterian constituency are found there, and an even higher proportion of Negro ministers, churches, and other projects. Except for Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, the South contains all of the Negro Presbyterian schools and colleges. All of the Sunday school missionaries and larger parishes are there.

Presbyterian activity among Negroes in the South is carried on in thirteen states and is organized into four synods and fifteen presbyteries. The work in the main—except for a relatively small number of self-supporting fields—is sponsored by the Board of National Missions, and is under the immediate direction of three departments: Work with Colored People, Educational and Medical Work, and Sunday School Missions.

The southern field has 350 churches, with a total membership exceeding 27,000. There are ten organized parishes, three community centers, and three day schools.

One of the most striking facts of the 1940-1950 decade is seen in the increasing mobility of the Negro, and more especially in his movement from the South. The U. S. Census figures of 1950 present an interesting story: Between 1940 and 1950 seven southern states, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and Kentucky lost a total of 249,360 Negroes, while the white population of those states increased by 2,046,511. During the same time the non-white population in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania increased by 558,135. In Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan, the non-white total rose by 599,417. In California alone, the in-

crease was 328,376. Between 1910 and 1940 the number of Negroes living in the South decreased from 88.7 per cent to 68 per cent.

Questions are frequently raised as to the effect of this mass movement of population from the South upon the churches, and specifically the Negro Presbyterian churches of the areas into which the Negro people have settled. Do they in any appreciable numbers become affiliated with our churches? If not, why not? Is the Church unsuitable, or the Negro unadaptable, or both?

To these and other germane questions there is no single answer. The problem is not simple. There are certain tenable premises, however, that may shed light on the matter.

Let us consider, for example, the seven southern states referred to above that showed the largest number of Negro migrants. The records reveal that, with the exception of Georgia, these states have from times past had the smallest number of Negro Presbyterian churches and members of any in the South. Texas has but two churches, one vacant, and less than fifty members in the entire state. Oklahoma and Arkansas have twenty-six churches, with less than 1,000 members. The churches in Alabama, Mississippi, and Kentucky are relatively few. This means, obviously, that the migrants from these states had little, if any, relationship or even acquaintance with the Presbyterian Church.

In considering the problem in the states into which they have moved, one gets another view of the same picture. Here again, especially in the three midwestern states indicated, and California, Negro Presbyterian churches are few. It is much the same story: the migrant comes from a background in which the Presbyterian Church has no place and enters into the almost totally new experience of a highly compact and centralized mode of existence in which the Church, including the Presbyterian Church, may have no part whatever.

The weightiest fact, however, is that as to numbers of members and churches, the Presbyterian Church among Negroes is decidedly a minority church in a minority group, and the factors noted above tend to keep it that way. Some of the churches of the North and West did show substantial membership gains during the period. Notable among these was Westminster of Los Angeles. Eight new churches were organized in the area also. A table of these churches will be found in the Appendix.

The Work in the South

The greatest concentration of Negro Presbyterian work in the South is to be found in Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia. The

following figures show how heavily the work is weighted in this southeastern area:

Catawba Synod embraces Negro Presbyterian activity in Virginia and North Carolina. It has 4 presbyteries, 116 ministers, and 161 churches with a communicant membership of 14,270. In 1950, the amount of \$173,135 was raised for self-support, plus \$70,331 for special activities, and \$21,260 given to benevolences. Atlantic Synod, covering South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, is made up of 5 presbyteries and has 83 ministers, 103 churches, and 9,268 communicant members. It obtained \$90,073 for self-support, plus special offerings of \$21,199 and contributed \$8,606 for benevolences.

The other two synods, Blue Ridge and Canadian—although they cover much more territory—are considerably smaller. Blue Ridge serves Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi, and in addition, small portions of Virginia and North Carolina, while Canadian Synod is responsible for the Negro Presbyterian work in Arkansas and Oklahoma, with a few churches in Texas and Missouri. These synods together have 6 presbyteries, 45 ministers serving 63 churches with 3,267 communicant members. The sum of \$46,998 was given for self-support, with \$13,765 special receipts and \$5,520 for benevolences. In addition to these fields, the Department of Work with Colored People exercises a continuing relationship with the Negro Presbyterian churches in Kentucky, although these churches are connected with the presbyteries and synod of that state.

It should not be assumed, however, that Negro Presbyterian work in the Blue Ridge and Canadian synods is without importance. The contrary is quite definitely true. There are good, substantial churches in Asheville, Knoxville, Chattanooga, Birmingham, Memphis, Little Rock, Oklahoma City, and Springfield, Missouri. Two of the Board's Negro junior colleges—Swift in Tennessee and Mary Holmes in Mississippi—serve the area. The Board's pioneer community center among Negroes in the South flourishes at Chattanooga. A new project of considerable promise—the John Calvin Church—is being opened at Nashville. The Triple Parish in rural Mississippi presents interesting possibilities of useful development. In Paducah, Kentucky, plans are under consideration that involve moving the Negro church to a more favorable location to serve a rapidly enlarging potential parish.

There is another factor that gives even greater significance to this work beyond the eastern mountains. It is that an increasing number of Presbyterians of both races, although continuing their relationship to racially separate judicatories, have conceived the work of the Church in larger

terms than race and have sought, insistently and with remarkable effectiveness, to translate their vision into fruitful, cooperative action.

Without doubt the finest example of this took place at Maryville College, Tennessee, in June, 1951. The Synod of Mid-South, which includes the white Presbyterian work of Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and portions of North Carolina and Georgia, met in Maryville for its annual sessions. Three other Presbyterian groups gathered there at the same time: the Summer School for ministers and lay workers; the Westminster Fellowship; and a group of Presbyterian churchwomen. The last three organizations represented all of the synods and races of the entire southeastern area. Besides President Ralph W. Lloyd and the faculty of Maryville College, three of the Boards of the Presbyterian Church U. S. A.—National Missions, Foreign Missions, and Christian Education—participated in the undertaking. It was a fortnight of high significance, both for the present day and for the not-too-distant time when we shall more resolutely purpose to possess with greater fulness the land which God has long since made ready.

Let us return for a closer view of our Negro work in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Here, on the whole, we find Negro Presbyterian activity at its highest development. North Carolina alone has more than 10,000 Negro Presbyterian members; South Carolina upwards of 7,000; Virginia, Georgia, and Florida easily account for 5,000.

Presbyterian roots in this area are deep and sturdy. They reach back to 1866, when, as we have pointed out, organized activity was initiated by white missionaries under the Committee on Freedmen of the General Assembly (Old School Branch). Activities were begun in the vicinity of Charlotte, North Carolina, where with the establishing of the Henry J. Biddle Institute, now Johnson C. Smith University, there were laid the foundations that have made Charlotte the stronghold of Negro Presbyterians throughout the field. That this influence has not diminished through time is seen in the fact that today, within a radius of ten miles of Charlotte, there are twenty-five Negro Presbyterian churches.

About the same time, another group of white Presbyterians representing the New School Branch, performed a notable service in South Carolina, establishing Fairfield and Brainerd Institute—schools which brought untold blessings—and churches in other parts of the state, notably around Sumter, that continue to flourish.

Visitors to these fields today are frequently disappointed at the apparent absence of the picturesque primitiveness traditionally associated with Negro life. It is true that one rarely finds the expected stereotype.

But there is much that is infinitely more meaningful: The undiminished fruitfulness of sections like the Amelia-Nottoway Counties in Virginia, and the areas around Charlotte, North Carolina, Sumter, South Carolina, and Knoxville, Tennessee. . . . The beneficent outreach of institutions like Harbison Institute in South Carolina and Boggs Academy in Georgia. . . . The marvelous transformation being wrought on the islands around Charleston, South Carolina. . . . The score or more of upstanding Negro Presbyterian churches in cities and larger towns, with ministers and members alert to their increasingly significant opportunities for service. . . . The Gillespie Hospital in Cordele, Georgia—one of the finest bits of missionary usefulness within the bounds of the Church. . . . A field trip with Sunday School Missionary Supervisor Joseph T. Jones and his associates, and the heartening assurance that this vital ministry to the neglected is still maintained. . . . A look-in on Newton Community Center in Chattanooga or “The Yellow House” of the Catawba Larger Parish in Charlotte. . . . Then the heart-warming experience of a commencement exercise at Barber-Scotia College, to see a graduating class of radiant young women receive from President L. S. Cozart their commission for service to God and humankind.

Perhaps the most revealing journey of all, and the most rewarding, would be a visit to the Annual Workers’ Conference at Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte. The experience of meeting with possibly a thousand Negro Presbyterians gathered from every section of the southern field, in a busy and productive three-day session, would be unforgettable.

The March Forward

An over-all view of activities today—north and west and south—reveals the impressive vitality of the work. The last two decades have witnessed transition—a steady stream has flowed from open country to town and city; from South and Southwest to urban East, Middle West and especially to the Pacific Coast. There has been expansion into new areas, and work has been established in response to emergency needs. Movement and change have not always been salutary; promising fields, usually rural, have been marooned and permitted to fall into disuse and decay. Inadequate financial undergirding has rendered unbearable the burden of maintaining many small churches; an adequate, comprehensive master plan for the whole work has not been effectively developed. Moreover, vigorous and extensive competitive activity by other denominations has not proved helpful to any of the groups involved. But little by little the work moves forward.

As one attempts to view the progress of Negro Presbyterian work on the whole during the period, five distinct areas of advance are clearly evident:

1. *The Training Program for Ministers and Lay People.* This activity, having been carried on previously in two separate units, entered a broader and what proved to be a richer field of service in 1940, when under the guidance of Dr. Henry S. Randolph of the Board of National Missions, the faculty of the school at Warren Wilson College invited a Negro Presbyterian minister to conduct one of the classes. The experiment was successful and the practice grew until the two racially separate two-week training schools were merged into one with a bi-racial faculty and student body, resulting in a mutually deepened sense of togetherness.

2. *Larger Parish Development.* This was a major advance. The decade witnessed the building up of three of these enterprises: the Amelia-Nottoway Parish at Burkeville, Virginia; the Catawba Parish, at Charlotte, North Carolina; and the Goodwill Parish of Sumter, South Carolina. These and other smaller units have added greatly to the outreach of the entire field.

3. *The Workers' Conference.* This agency, called by many "The Little General Assembly," came to full flower after release of the pressure of the war years. The Moderators of the General Assembly came to share its sessions regularly. Secretaries and executives of the General Council and the various Boards participated helpfully. Attendance figures rose to approximately the thousand mark. It has clearly become a profound influence for good, not alone throughout the Negro field but the entire Church.

4. *Young People's Activities.* This phase of the work showed great advance also. By means of senior and junior conferences and camps, youth caravans, and Westminster Fellowship groups, the young people were brought into an enlarged experience of Christian Fellowship and service.

5. *The Institute on Racial and Cultural Relations.* In 1946 the Federal Council of Churches issued a pronouncement which called for action in working for "a non-segregated Church in a non-segregated society." The same year the Presbyterian General Assembly endorsed the action, and in 1947 it voted to approve the setting up of an Institute on Racial and Cultural Relations, to seek to discover and develop methods and procedures designed to facilitate such a program. The Institute, related to the Division of Social Education and Action, was sponsored jointly by the Boards of Christian Education and National Missions and was given a three-year span. William H. McConaghy, then of Albany, New York, and Jesse B.

Barber, of Lincoln Seminary at the time, were chosen director and associate director, respectively.

The Institute proved to be a salutary influence for Christian brotherhood throughout the Church and its labors were shared extensively with other churches of America.

Emphasis on education, traditionally one of the major thrusts of the Presbyterian Negro enterprise, is continued at various levels: Boggs Academy and Gillespie-Selden Institute in Georgia, and Mary Potter Academy in North Carolina provide upper elementary and high school training; there are three junior colleges, Harbison, in South Carolina, Mary Holmes, in Mississippi, and Swift Memorial in Tennessee. Barber-Scotia College, at Concord, North Carolina, offering a full four-year program for women, is accredited by state and regional agencies. Johnson C. Smith University, although now officially unrelated to the Board of National Missions, continues to be an integral factor in the advancement of the work.

Eight members of the Board's staff of Sunday school missionaries are Negroes and their helpful ministry extends to every area of the southern field.

* * * * *

One of the most encouraging features in the program of the Church is revealed in the increased activity of Negro Presbyterians. This is especially true with respect to their young people. They are integrally and enthusiastically connected with Westminster Fellowship. Young Bryant George, son of Johnson C. Smith Seminary's able dean, has been Vice Moderator of the national group. The young people are joining youth caravans and are participating in summer conferences and camps. Negro women are more active in Presbyterian women's societies; the Council of Presbyterian Men of Catawba Synod held a three-day retreat in the late summer of 1951. There are Faith and Life Seminars, and planning groups for the New Life Movement and the New Curriculum. The Workers' Conference and Summer School for ministers and lay workers are mighty factors.

Participation by Negro Presbyterians at higher church levels began around 1933 when Henry L. McCrorey and Joseph W. Holley were elected, respectively, to the Boards of Christian Education and National Missions. These men, both distinguished educators and ardent churchmen, so served that the way was left open for others to follow. Today, Mrs. Chaunce Harlee of Philadelphia and Dean Frank T. Wilson of Howard University are members of the Board of Christian Education, Dr. John

T. Colbert of Baltimore, of the Board of National Missions, and Dr. James H. Robinson, New York City, of The Board of Foreign Missions. Judge Herbert E. Millen, a distinguished Philadelphian, is the first Negro Presbyterian to be elected to the membership of the General Council, the honor being first conferred by the Seattle General Assembly in 1948.

Dr. James W. Smith of Charlotte is a member of the Permanent Commission on Inter-Church Relations; the Rev. Charles W. Talley, of Cheraw, South Carolina, of the Department of Ministerial Relations; Dr. Frank C. Shirley, of the Committee on United Promotion; and Dr. Lionel B. West of Charlotte, of the National Commission of Evangelism; while President Hardy Liston, of Johnson C. Smith University, and the Rev. Edler G. Hawkins of New York City, are members of the Western Section of the Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System. Dr. Shirley, Herbert R. Pinkney, and Charles W. Talley serve as joint field representatives of National Missions and Christian Education in the South, and Robert P. Johnson works in a similar capacity among the Negro churches of the North and West.

One of the agencies of major importance to Negro Presbyterian activity in the South is the Advisory Committee on Negro Work, a greatly helpful influence in the development of the policies and program of the field. The committee meets annually, and its membership, all Negro, is made up of representative men and women, with T. B. Jones, president of Harbison Junior College in South Carolina the present and capable chairman.

The Long Day Closes

The end of the year 1950 brought to completion the active labors of Dr. McCoy. Not many months later, on September 2, 1951, he entered into rest. His ministry, extending through more than forty years, had been distinguished by extraordinary diligence, devotion, fidelity, and fruitfulness. Because of him, and through him, by God's grace, the Kingdom of God had been made more manifest, and the Negro Presbyterian enterprise had been enabled to reach higher ground.

It is altogether fitting that his epitaph expresses through the words of a beloved friend the quintessence of Albert Byron McCoy's radiant faith and blessed benediction:

"Tomorrow Will Be Fair."¹⁴

¹⁴From an address by Dr. Hermann N. Morse, delivered at the Presbyterian National Staff Conference at Barber-Scotia College, Concord, North Carolina, September 5, 1951.

CLIMBING JACOB'S LADDER

And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it . . . And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not . . . this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. Genesis 28: 10,11,12; 16, 17

We come to the closing pages of this history. We have followed the course of the Presbyterian Church in word and action with respect to the Negro people of America from the beginning. We have shown how slavery antedated the existence of the Presbyterian Church in America, and how its economic importance came later to dim her moral and religious ideals. We have seen that there were those who, great in spirit, devoted themselves to helpful endeavor for the Negro in bondage. The challenge of the emancipation, the beginning of organized activity by the Church, the growth and spread and upward reach have been revealed. Pioneers of faith and vision—men and women, young and old—all sharers of a glorious enterprise, have moved across these pages.

The whole story mirrors in spirit that character with whose name and tribulations the race has identified its own long struggle and unshakable confidence in God. This is vibrantly expressed in the deeply moving "Song of Ascents," from which comes the title of our story:

"We are climbing Jacob's ladder - - -

"Ev'ry round goes higher and higher - - -

"Soldiers of the Cross."

* * * * *

Negro Presbyterians do not come to their Church as mendicants, with empty hands. They have much to offer. They bring a work that has been tried and challenged through the years, and in our day, from without and

from within; its deep roots have remained undisturbed; the foundations stand unmoved. From John Chavis and John Gloucester to Daniel Jackson Sanders and Albert Byron McCoy the record is one of loyal, well-rendered service. The workers and their work together make up a heritage that is incomparably precious, and to the Church it can be as a pearl of great price.

"The fields are white and ready for harvest." "There is much land to be possessed." These are declarations that have been insistently sounded again and again in the reports to the General Assembly by the Committee responsible for the development of Presbyterian Negro Work, from 1865 well over into the dawn of the present century. They have prophetic meaning and challenge for us today.

Through the long, hard years, Negro Presbyterians have gathered a deep pool of living faith which they have kept inviolate for their Church. However widely they may vary on many matters, in this there is utter unanimity. Negro Presbyterians bring to their Church their undimmed confidence that through her honor and obedience to her Lord, and because of her deep spiritual integrity, she and they together will achieve, by the grace of God, the full possession of that heritage into which she has so splendidly entered.

APPENDIX

I. A STATISTICAL RECORD OF FREEDMEN'S WORK*

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Total Contribution For Work</i> | <i>Contribution of Fields</i> | <i>Churches</i> | <i>Members</i> |
|-------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1875 | \$ 43,689 | \$ 8,246 | 123 | 9,952 |
| 1880 | 46,134 | 19,482 | 150 | 11,108 |
| 1885 | 90,120 | 17,254 | 198 | 11,372 |
| 1890 | 176,325 | 30,464 | 245 | 16,502 |
| 1895 | 173,050 | 63,385 | 306 | 17,083 |
| 1900 | 155,033 | 33,981 | 339 | 19,588 |
| 1905 | 189,654 | 42,884 | 366 | 22,189 |
| 1910 | 207,799 | 63,459 | 401 | 23,872 |
| 1915 | 288,480 | 76,697 | 431 | 26,376 |
| 1920 | 429,560 | 215,150 | 448 | 26,706 |
| 1925 | | 206,229 | 418 | 23,528 |
| 1930 | | 179,084 | 426 | 22,875 |
| 1935 | | 130,233 | 394 | 23,953 |
| 1940 | | 152,786 | 364 | 24,332 |
| 1945 | | 344,993 | 343 | 25,986 |
| 1950 | | 415,501 | 327 | 26,805 |

In addition to these sums, the Freedmen's work gave the following amounts to the schools: 1900, \$37,781; 1905, \$63,270; 1910, \$72,023; 1915, \$72,797; 1920, \$155,373; (The separate record of school contributions is not given prior to 1900 or after 1920).

The incompleteness of this table is apparent. Moreover, there are large variations between different sets of figures in both the financial and membership records. The table can only be taken as indicative of the general trend of the work, and the accuracy of the figures here given is not vouched for. These figures, nevertheless, bear witness to those periods of growth: those "halcyon years" from 1895 over into the new century.

* *Minutes of the General Assembly, passim*

II. 25 LARGEST NEGRO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES IN U.S.—1950*

| <i>Location and Name</i> | <i>Members</i> | <i>S. S. Members</i> | <i>New Members</i> | <i>Receipts</i> | <i>Benevo- lences</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| New York, St. James..... | 2,415 | 638 | 77 | \$38,094 | \$3,337 |
| Brooklyn, Siloam | 1,001 | 197 | 160 | 30,200 | 1,250 |
| Los Angeles, Westminster.... | 931 | 345 | 143 | 30,156 | 2,242 |
| Baltimore, Grace | 926 | 261 | 34 | 14,845 | 130 |
| New York, Church of Master | 875 | 499 | 113 | 29,472 | 846 |
| New York, St. Augustine..... | 857 | 481 | 102 | 28,933 | 375 |
| James Is., St. James..... | 832 | 330 | 46 | 2,270 | 156 |
| Pittsburgh, Grace | 625 | 287 | 67 | 14,864 | 582 |
| Philadelphia, Berean | 623 | 246 | 31 | 11,897 | 325 |
| Detroit, St. John's..... | 620 | 270 | 33 | 15,596 | 1,449 |
| Mayesville, S. C., Goodwill.... | 590 | 240 | 13 | 1,775 | 372 |
| Philadelphia, 1st African..... | 584 | 230 | 35 | 13,034 | 684 |
| Philadelphia, Reeves Mem'l.. | 541 | 375 | 25 | 6,690 | 458 |
| Washington, D. C., 15th St... | 534 | 128 | 25 | 12,809 | 1,565 |
| Chicago, Grace | 532 | 415 | 21 | 9,280 | 701 |
| Washington, D. C., Tabor.... | 506 | 199 | 33 | 10,964 | 1,532 |
| Roanoke, 5th Ave..... | 454 | 217 | 1 | 12,000 | 102 |
| Charlotte, Brooklyn | 453 | 262 | 7 | 6,432 | 816 |
| Salisbury, N. C., Church St... | 440 | 91 | 20 | 4,050 | 220 |
| New York, Rendall..... | 429 | 169 | 43 | 10,443 | 57 |
| Jersey City, Lafayette..... | 400 | 206 | v | 10,665 | 1,160 |
| New York, Mount Morris.... | 396 | 219 | 34 | 13,108 | 270 |
| Sardinia, S. C., Melina..... | 383 | 153 | 26 | 3,000 | 123 |
| Charlotte, N. C., 7th St..... | 378 | 262 | 16 | 4,365 | 1,275 |
| Pittsburgh, Bethesda | 371 | 163 | 40 | 11,600 | 692 |

* *Minutes of the General Assembly, 1951*

III. MEMBERSHIP OF SELECTED CHURCHES OF NORTH AND WEST IN 1940*

To find increase in membership during the 10-year period 1940-1950,
compare with figures in Table II.

| | |
|---|-------|
| St. James, New York..... | 1,826 |
| St. Augustine, New York..... | 315 |
| Church of the Master, New York..... | 213 |
| Westminster, Los Angeles..... | 272 |
| Grace, Baltimore | 641 |
| Tabor, Washington, D. C..... | 275 |
| Fifteenth Street, Washington, D. C..... | 520 |
| St. John's, Detroit..... | 298 |
| Grace, Chicago | 438 |
| Lafayette, Jersey City..... | 298 |
| Siloam, Brooklyn | 527 |

*Minutes of the General Assembly, 1950

IV. NEW CHURCHES ORGANIZED IN NORTH AND WEST, 1940-1950*
as a result of population increase

| | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| New York City..... | Mount Morris |
| Philadelphia | Bethel |
| Baltimore | Cherry Hill |
| " | New Life |
| " | Knox |
| Oakland, Calif. | Faith |
| Newark, N. J..... | Mount Carmel |
| San Francisco | Hope |
| Los Angeles | Hope |
| Omaha | Hillside |

*Minutes of the General Assembly, 1951

V. 25 LARGEST NEGRO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES IN THE SOUTH—1950*

| <i>Location and Name</i> | <i>Church Members</i> | <i>Members S. Ch. S.</i> | <i>New Members</i> | <i>Receipts</i> | <i>Benevo- lences</i> |
|--|---------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| James Is., St. James..... | 832 | 330 | 46 | \$2,270 | \$156 |
| Mayesville, S. C., Goodwill.... | 590 | 240 | 13 | 1,775 | 372 |
| Roanoke, 5th Ave..... | 454 | 217 | 1 | 12,000 | 102 |
| Charlotte, N. C., Brooklyn.... | 453 | 262 | 7 | 6,432 | 816 |
| Salisbury, N. C., Church St.. | 440 | 91 | 20 | 4,050 | 220 |
| Sardinia, S. C., Melina..... | 383 | 153 | 26 | 3,000 | 123 |
| Charlotte, N. C., 7th St..... | 378 | 262 | 16 | 4,365 | 1,275 |
| Oxford, N. C., Timothy Darling | 368 | 288 | 5 | 2,000 | 408 |
| Buies, N. C., Panthersford.... | 361 | 230 | 7 | 750 | 310 |
| Knoxville, Shiloh | 338 | 83 | 10 | 3,397 | 405 |
| Charlotte, N. C., Biddleville.. | 317 | 195 | 5 | 5,965 | 782 |
| Chattanooga, Leonard St..... | 288 | 112 | 19 | 6,128 | 310 |
| Newport News, Carver Mem'l | 280 | 67 | 22 | 3,550 | 264 |
| Charlotte, N. C., R. D. Woodland | 276 | 199 | 15 | 3,600 | 210 |
| Charleston, S.C., Wallingford | 276 | 85 | 23 | 3,200 | 193 |
| Sanford, N. C., Blandonia..... | 268 | 103 | 1 | 3,571 | 175 |
| Dalzell, S. C., Ebenezer..... | 264 | 130 | 20 | 2,336 | 192 |
| Greensboro, N. C., St. James.. | 257 | 130 | 10 | 9,119 | 853 |
| Concord, N. C., Westminster | 253 | 71 | 8 | 3,092 | 537 |
| Birmingham, Ala., Miller Memorial | 250 | 168 | 22 | 4,315 | 548 |
| Sumter, S. C., Sumter 2nd | 250 | 62 | 21 | 2,650 | 226 |
| Winston-Salem, Grace | 228 | 150 | 9 | 5,340 | 52 |
| Key West, Trinity | 219 | 64 | 6 | 2,152 | 178 |
| Sumter, R. D. Congruity..... | 211 | 95 | 14 | 1,275 | 34 |
| Mayesville, Trinity | 210 | 82 | — | 2,773 | 188 |

*Minutes of the General Assembly, 1951

VI. A 10-YEAR RECORD OF NEGRO PRESBYTERIAN WORK
IN THE SOUTH BY SYNODS*

1940

| <i>Synods</i> | <i>Number Churches</i> | <i>Church Members</i> | <i>S. S. Members</i> | <i>Receipts</i> | <i>Benevolences</i> |
|----------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Atlantic | 121 | 9,070 | 5,789 | \$43,338 | \$4,019 |
| Blue Ridge.. | 41 | 2,049 | 1,587 | 12,953 | 1,602 |
| Canadian | 34 | 1,228 | 1,228 | 10,240 | 820 |
| Catawba | 168 | 11,985 | 9,873 | 86,255 | 6,576 |
| Totals | 364 | 24,332 | 18,477 | \$152,786 | \$13,017 |

1945

| | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|--------|--------|-----------|----------|
| Atlantic | 111 | 9,136 | 5,345 | \$105,558 | \$5,658 |
| Blue Ridge.. | 39 | 2,270 | 1,637 | 32,089 | 2,980 |
| Canadian | 31 | 1,114 | 942 | 16,513 | 1,020 |
| Catawba | 162 | 13,466 | 9,986 | 190,833 | 13,184 |
| Totals | 343 | 25,986 | 17,910 | \$344,993 | \$22,842 |

1950

| | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|--------|--------|-----------|----------|
| Atlantic | 103 | 9,268 | 5,381 | \$111,272 | \$8,606 |
| Blue Ridge.. | 34 | 2,368 | 1,437 | 43,250 | 3,980 |
| Canadian | 29 | 899 | 675 | 17,513 | 1,540 |
| Catawba | 161 | 14,270 | 9,925 | 243,466 | 21,260 |
| Totals | 327 | 26,805 | 17,418 | \$415,501 | \$35,386 |

* *Minutes of the General Assembly: 1941; 1946; 1951*

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